

# THE ARGOSY.

OCTOBER, 1884.

## THE WHITE WITCH.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

#### THE JOURNEY.

THE afternoon had been dull and dreary, and though it was not much past four o'clock, the evening mists were already gathering over Croxham woods and Croxham Abbey. Godfrey Mayne stood in the drawing-room of the latter edifice, gazing about him as a man bewildered. Events seemed to be taking a sudden turn which for the moment dazed him.

Ben Griffiths, who had been talking to him outside the window, had disappeared from the scene; Mary Dixon had been with him inside the room, and had disappeared: instead of these, Godfrey saw advancing the band of policemen. Not six of them, as Ben had said in his haste: there were four, and someone who was in plain clothes and seemed to be their head, a stranger to Godfrey.

Holding his hand to his forehead for a moment, as one does whose brain is confused, Godfrey remembered that his first work must be to find Mary and protect her. Were these ominous officers of the law coming after *her*, he asked himself, or after her mother. Swiftly passing into the hall, he was wondering whether to look for her upstairs or down, when one of the maids, singing a light song under her breath, came towards him from the servants' apartments. It was Emily. Evidently she knew nothing yet of the grave crisis that was threatening. The girl started when she saw Godfrey. She had supposed him to be still confined to the easy chair in his room.

"Oh, sir!" she cried in her surprise, "are you well enough to be downstairs? I'm sure I'm glad."

"Oh, quite well," returned Godfrey. "I was looking for Miss Dixon. Have you seen her?"

"I saw her go out by the refectory two or three minutes ago," replied Emily. "She's gone for a walk, I think, sir: she had her bonnet and mantle on."

Godfrey caught up his hat and went out also. He did not know in what direction to look, and took a few steps hither and thither as well as his weakness and lameness allowed, for his knee was feeling troublesome, and gazed about him; but he could not see her. Perfectly aware that he was in no state to follow up the search, he turned back, hoping she was in some secure hiding-place, safe from the policemen. As he was entering the Abbey, one of them met him, a man he knew.

"Did I see three or four of you coming up to the house just now, Taylor?" he asked, with all the indifference he could assume.

"Yes, sir," replied Taylor, dropping his voice to a confidential key. "We are come to search the Abbey, sir."

"To search the Abbey!" repeated Godfrey, proudly and resentfully. "What for? What do you mean?"

"Well, sir, we men don't know the rights of it; it has not been explained to us. Inspector Macdonald ordered us out on the errand. It has to do with a murder, we heard, and that the party wanted for it is hiding himself in the Abbey, or somewhere round about it."

Godfrey's ears eagerly caught up the word "himself." It was evident that the men knew little or nothing.

"Who was it gave the information?" he asked.

"A London detective, sir, who was sent for by Sir William Hunt."

Godfrey was not in the habit of swearing, but he threw a very bad word at Mr. Cattermole and his treachery, as he went forward to meet Inspector Macdonald.

"I ask your pardon, sir, for this intrusion," said the latter with deprecation, "but we could not help ourselves. Mr. Mayne is not at home, I find."

"No," replied Godfrey; "but *I* am. What is the meaning of this?"

"We've got a warrant, sir, to search the Abbey. I'm sure I feel ashamed to put such an indignity on Mr. Mayne; but the law must be obeyed, sir, as you know. It is about that old business of Sir William Hunt's, sir, the murder of his son," added the inspector. "The people who were connected with it are thought to be staying now in this neighbourhood."

"But not at the Abbey?" flashed Godfrey. "Who granted the search-warrant?"

"The new magistrate, sir; that rich cotton-broker, who has just come to live at Elm Hall ——"

"I thought so," haughtily interjected Godfrey. "One of our own order would never have thus insulted my father."

"It was applied for by a detective who is down here from Scotland Yard; he is acting with Sir William," continued the inspector. "I will read it to you, sir, before we begin our search."

"No," dissented Godfrey, "I decline to hear it. My father will be in very shortly: he can do as he pleases."

Terrified on the score of Mary, restlessly uneasy, Godfrey wandered out again. It struck him that she might have taken refuge at the farm under the friendly wing of Nancy Wilding. He was limping towards it when he met Nancy.

"Is Miss Dixon at your house, Nancy?" he asked. "Have you seen her?"

Nancy looked at him keenly. "No," she answered slowly, "Miss Dixon is not at our house. Ought you to be about, Master Godfrey?"

But Godfrey was struck with something peculiar in her look and tone; he also noticed that she did not deny having seen Miss Dixon. With a warm impulsive movement, he put both his hands upon her shoulders.

"Nancy," he said earnestly, "you have been my good friend for many years. Be so now. If you know aught of Miss Dixon, tell it me. More danger is gathering about her than you can picture, and I must shield her from it if I can."

"Then I think I had better tell you, Master Godfrey," was the unexpected answer. And Nancy began a short narrative.

That afternoon, soon after four o'clock, Nancy Wilding, coming towards home from an errand, saw accidentally a light spring cart with a white covering drawn up in the lane by the back wall of the farm. She knew both the cart and horse to be Miller Bowden's. In her curiosity she went up to it, to inquire as to what it was doing there, and to her surprise found the cart had nobody in it. While wondering at this, and exercising her imaginative powers, Ben Griffiths came rushing up from the direction of the Abbey, carrying a lady's handbag, which he put into the cart.

"What's the English of all this, Ben?" cried she.

"The English of it is, that it's no business of yours, Miss Nancy," answered impudent Ben. "The sooner you make yourself scarce, the better."

"No doubt," retorted Nancy.

She went a little way farther off, and stood watching. In a minute, she saw Miss Dixon, also hastening in the direction of the cart. Before she had quite gained it, Nancy advanced and stood in her way.

"Don't hinder me, Nancy," pleaded the panting girl; "oh, don't hinder me!"

"I'd not hinder you, Miss Dixon," replied Nancy gravely. "I'd rather help you if I can; though I don't know what the trouble is."

"I am trying to escape from my enemies," she said. "Ben is so good; he has got this cart, and is going to drive me to the station. Do not let anybody know that you have seen me, for the love of heaven!"

"Not *any* body," said Nancy.

Mary, now on her way to the cart, arrested her steps, and turned. "Except Mr. Godfrey—should he ask," she whispered. "Tell him that I am gone away to where I shall be protected and sheltered."

The next moment, Mary was hidden from observation under the cover of the cart, and Ben was rattling it along the lane on its road to Cheston Station. This was the information that Nancy now disclosed to Godfrey.

"Thank you, Nancy," he quietly said : and went back indoors as quickly as he was able.

He must follow Mary to the station, and go up with her to London, to be her protector on the journey. A fond thought (though not a very likely one) took possession of him—that she was probably gone to take refuge with his aunt, Mrs. Penteith. He remembered how, a day or two ago, she had thanked him for suggesting it. In two minutes he was ready for the journey, even to his overcoat, which he put on.

To walk to Cheston station in time to catch the five o'clock up-train, would have been nothing to Godfrey a short while ago, but he knew that he could not do it now. He was feeling sick and giddy already from pain and exhaustion, and made for the stables, hoping, praying that some horse, some vehicle might be there, and one of the grooms to make ready and drive it. His head was becoming curiously confused.

His own horse was in the stable, his dog-cart in its place in the coach house; but never a groom could he see. Not a sign of man anywhere. Steadying himself for a short interval against the wall to gather strength, Godfrey was proceeding to the task of harnessing the horse himself, when the brougham drove slowly into the yard, after leaving Mr. and Mrs. Mayne at the Abbey.

"Barth," said Godfrey, appearing before the astonished coachman, "I have business at Cheston station. Drive me to it at the top of your speed, or I may be too late. Don't spare your horses."

Barth turned his horses round, noticing that his young master reeled from weakness as he got into the carriage, and drove off, indulging his amazement.

It was some minutes before Mr. Mayne's anger, at finding his house in possession of the police, allowed him to understand or even listen to the inspector, who at last induced him to give him a private interview. But Mrs. Mayne, whose presence, as she stood without speaking by her husband's side since their entrance, had prevented the man from explaining his business promptly, now interfered, and in a hoarse whisper begged him and her husband to let her know the truth of the matter at once. Mr. Mayne, returning to his senses a little, would not hear of this; but, giving her fussily in charge of Mrs. Garner, he went with the police-inspector into the library.

"Now, what is all this confounded nonsense?" asked he, as soon as he had settled himself judicially in his chair.



The inspector produced the warrant, and told him respectfully, that it had been granted that morning, on information supplied by a London detective named Power, who had been brought down from Town by Sir William Hunt.

"Now that's talking nonsense, Macdonald," said the irascible old gentleman. "My good friend, William Hunt, would not send you into *my* house with a search-warrant. You must have made some strange mistake."

The inspector hastened to say that if there was a mistake, it was not he who had made it; he had only done as he was ordered. Whilst he was speaking, the front door bell rang loudly, and Hawkins, who had entirely lost his head in the alarm the police caused him, showed in Sir William Hunt.

In a small neighbourhood, a matter of this kind—the march of the police upon one of its most important mansions—cannot be kept quiet. All kinds of versions were beginning to circulate; and Sir William Hunt, walking abroad in Cheston, had heard of them. It *was* a mistake; and he had come striding over to the Abbey in deep distress and contrition, to set it right.

The search-warrant applied for by the London detective, Mr. Power, to the new magistrate, ought to have been for "the Abbey Farm." Between them they had committed the error of making it out for "The Abbey;" perhaps not altogether conscious that the two places were distinct.

"You don't think I'd allow such a thing, my old friend, do you?" cried Sir William, his hands and Mr. Mayne's locked together.

"I *know* you'd not; I was telling Macdonald so." And they both relieved their ire by turning it on the inspector.

"But what does it all mean?" cried Mr. Mayne. "What is the search-warrant for? Who is being looked after?"

Sir William's explanation took up a little time. It appeared that while he was in London with Lady Hunt, he paid a visit to Scotland Yard. He had intended to stay but a day in town; but he stayed two or three days; and being impatient to hear whether Mr. Detective Cattermole was progressing in his search after the guilty parties, he betook himself to Scotland Yard to enquire, supposing that the detective force there received Mr. Cattermole's reports daily. Sir William was introduced to a superior officer named Johnson, he had a long and confidential conference with him, and the result was that Mr. Johnson determined to send another detective to Croxham, to "look up" Mr. Cattermole and his dilatory proceedings. At least, that was the impression Sir William carried away with him. This second detective, Mr. Power, had now been at Croxham for two days, hard at work in secret; and the first step he took openly was to apply for a search-warrant for the Abbey Farm, the new justice, a stranger to the place, having granted it, in error, for the Abbey.

Inspector Macdonald listened to this explanation as eagerly as Mr.

Mayne; more so, indeed, for the latter was too bewildered to pay much attention.

"Look here, Hunt," he said, "what is it that's amiss at the farm? What do they expect to find there? Tell me that."

Sir William looked bewildered: to answer the question was quite beyond his power. The new man, Power, did not give him reasons for what he did; he was remarkably close and silent.

"It is all about my poor son's murder, and the people who are thought to be somewhere near, and who are dodging us," said he. "I say, Mayne, it's a blessing my wife is away! She'd never let me have any more peace if she knew of this entrance into your house to-day."

Sir William Hunt, backed by the Inspector, stopped the search, and the men withdrew from the Abbey. The farm could not be entered, as no warrant had been obtained for it.

Meanwhile Ben Griffiths drove the spring-cart cheerily along, and reached Cheston station before the train was up. Soon they saw it come in, and Mary despatched Ben to get her a ticket for London.

"First-class, miss?"

"Oh, any class, Ben, so that I get away," she said trembling.

"Yes; first-class, I suppose."

Ben got the ticket and came back to her. The train waited ten minutes at Cheston, but Mary thought she had better get into it at once, while few people were about. "Ben," she said, taking his hand into hers before she left the shelter of the cart, "I shall never forget your kindness. I cannot reward it now, but ——"

"Don't you talk about that, miss," interrupted Ben with moist eyes. "I'd rather do things for you for nothing than for other folks at a price. I *stole* this here cart to-day," he went on to confess, "and old Bowden will go on at me like a house afire; but I'd do as much again to-morrow for you, and a deal more."

Mary could not forbear smiling. She chose a carriage that had some passengers in it, and Ben placed her little bag beside her as she took her seat. An old gentleman and old lady were beyond her in the carriage; they were talking and did not notice her. She drew the curtain before the window at her elbow, and sat back, hoping to escape observation. Passengers came up by twos and threes, and took their places in the train, and the time of its departure was at hand. Ben strolled about on the platform, leaving the miller's horse to take care of itself.

Dashing up to the station came the well-known brougham of Croxham Abbey. Barth pulled up his horses with a jerk, and Godfrey Mayne got out. Mary Dixon, cowering behind her blind, saw him, and clasped her hands in trouble. "What shall I do?" she gasped to herself: "how avoid him?"

Godfrey had only time to take his ticket and dash into the nearest

first-class compartment he came to before the train started. It was already in motion when a young, slight, fair man rushed on to the platform without having had time to take his ticket, and going, as Godfrey had done, straight to the nearest carriage, halted at that in which young Mr. Mayne was already seated.

Ben, standing at the door, glancing at Mr. Godfrey and thinking he looked very ill, was pushed aside by the new comer, who spoke sharply :

"Here, out of the way, will you !" and he opened the door and jumped in.

Ben staggered back at sound of the voice, and stared at him with wide eyes, again and again. He then tore along by the side of the moving train, looking with eagerness into every carriage. At last he succeeded in finding Miss Dixon. She was not alone, as Ben knew : the old lady and gentleman, smothered in rugs, were curled up in the corner of the other end of the compartment. But Ben's errand was too important for the presence of strangers to prevent his speaking ; he sprang up on the step and hissed out in a gruff whisper which made the old lady scream :

"Look out ! Look out, miss. As sure as I'm alive there's somebody after you."

Before Mary could speak Ben had sprung down and disappeared.

Godfrey Mayne, feverish with anxiety about Mary, fatigued by premature exertion, was sitting a few carriages away from her, staring fixedly at the opposite seat, taking no notice of his fellow-traveller, who sat at his end of the carriage very quietly, apparently asleep. But when Godfrey, growing sick and faint with weakness, went to the window, opened it, put his head out, and then drew back, turned, and moved restlessly about, unable to keep still, he seemed to communicate his uneasiness to his companion, who bent his head still lower on his breast as if in sleep, but gave from time to time keen glances at the other man.

When the train, an express, reached its next stopping-place, Clewe, Godfrey felt too ill to get out and look for Mary's carriage. When the guard came by to look at the tickets, his companion had to explain that, having been only just in time to catch the train, he had started without one ; and during the colloquy which followed as he drew out his purse and paid his fare, his voice, which he kept low, struck Godfrey and caused him to examine the stranger for the first time. He was so slight, so fair, so beardless, that he looked scarcely more than a boy ; his eyes were light, his eyebrows and eyelashes flaxen, his mouth had thin, straight lips. Godfrey fancied he had somewhere seen somebody a little like him.

The young man seemed disconcerted by the close attention his fellow-traveller now, for a few minutes, bestowed upon him ; but as the train whirled on all Godfrey's thoughts were diverted to Mary, and his chances of taking her safely to his aunt's house in Eaton

Place when they reached London. The fatigue and anxiety he was going through were telling heavily on him; his face was ghastly white, and he could not rest in any position; he began to fear his strength would not hold out to the journey's end.

Then the voice of the stranger, not in quite the same tones as he had used before, addressed him:

"I can see that you are far from being well enough to take so long a journey, sir. I am a doctor; will you allow me to prescribe for you?"

He spoke very courteously and genially, and drew from his pocket a case, from which he took a small bottle.

"Thank you; you are very kind," answered Godfrey faintly. "It is true I am not very well," he added, still wondering what it was about this stranger which seemed just to stop short of bringing some memory to his mind. "But if, as I think, it is a sedative you propose to give me, I dare not take it: it might throw me into so deep a sleep that I should not awake at the journey's end."

"It is not a sedative, but a stimulant. And you had better take it, for unless you do have something to keep you up, trust me, you will be insensible long before we reach London."

Godfrey felt this to be so probable that he hesitated no longer, but swallowed the draught, and settled himself again in his corner. But he had scarcely time to discover, by the drowsiness which he felt creeping over him, that he had been deceived, before the sleeping-draught overcame him, and he fell back unconscious. The stranger then arranged him comfortably in his corner with a satisfied expression of face, and went to sleep himself.

When at last the express was nearing the terminus in London and came to a standstill for the collection of tickets, the young doctor ingeniously slipped out of the carriage, and got into the next. The guard had much difficulty in arousing the other passenger, and thought he had never seen a man so sound asleep before. Godfrey seemed dazed, and could hardly be brought to understand that it was his ticket which was wanted. Then the train went on.

Now Mary Dixon, knowing that Godfrey was in the train and fearing very much that somebody else was, a greater enemy than Godfrey, or what did Ben's parting warning mean, had been wondering how she could best elude the notice of these two pursuers; and she could think of nothing better than remaining in the carriage until the crowd of people should have left the station. Accordingly when the train slowly drew up at the terminus, Mary ensconced herself right back in her corner, her feet doubled up on the seat and the blind well drawn before the window. A porter looked in, saw nobody, and went on again. The old gentleman and lady, her fellow travellers, had left the train at its last stopping-place.

Presently, peeping out, Mary saw Godfrey assisted across the platform by a man in the station uniform. He looked frightfully ill,

and was taken into the waiting-room. Her heart ached for him, her heart yearned to comfort him; she could hardly help running to him there and then.

Waiting yet a little while until he should be safely away, she began to think her time for escape had come. As yet she had not seen a sign of anybody else to dread. Most of the passengers had gone, with their luggage, and the bustle of the platform had nearly subsided. It was not late; not yet half past ten.

Carrying her bag in her hand, Mary quietly left the carriage and was about to walk towards the cabs, when the young man who had been so attentive to Godfrey came up to her and raised his hat.

"I am here to look after you, you see," said he cheerfully.

She glanced round at the fair beardless face, at the bright hard smile on the thin lips, and, shuddering from head to foot, gave vent to an exclamation of terror, which was lost in the shriek of a moving engine.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

AT MRS. PENTEITH'S.

AFTER the guard had gone off with his ticket, Godfrey Mayne lay back in the carriage, dazed and bewildered. Where was he? What had happened to him? It was with an effort that he recalled only an outline of the circumstances.

Mary? Yes, Mary was in one of the carriages before him. He must find her as soon as they got in, and convey her to his aunt's in Eaton Place. But how was it that he felt so drowsy?—why could he not keep his eyes open? Then he remembered the draught the young doctor had given him, and looked round the carriage. But where was the doctor? He was gone. The mental effort to recall these facts was too much for Godfrey; his head fell back, and he slept again.

At the terminus, when the train stopped, there was the same difficulty in arousing him that the guard had experienced. The latter, called to by a porter, came to the carriage door. He was from Lancashire, and knew Godfrey.

"Dead drunk," pronounced the porter.

"Get along with you!" cried the guard indignantly. "Drunk indeed! It is young Mr. Mayne of Croxham Abbey."

"Folks drink, if they've a mind to, whether they live in a Abbey or an hovel," retorted the porter.

"*He* doesn't," said the guard. "He has had a bad illness: got shot in mistake for somebody else. I never was more surprised than when I saw him come to the train."

"I think I must have been drugged," said Godfrey, when they

had succeeded in awaking him. "There was a young man in the carriage with me, a doctor he called himself, and he gave me a draught."

"Why should he drug you, sir?" asked the guard, believing that young Mr. Mayne's mind was wandering.

"Well, I suppose he meant it for a sleeping-draught," amended Godfrey: "he saw I was faint and ill."

They brought him a glass of water in the station room, and Godfrey, after drinking it, tried to collect his thoughts. Suddenly he remembered Mary, and staggered to his feet.

"I must go out," he said. "There was a young lady somewhere in the train; I must find her. I have to take her to my aunt's."

But even in the midst of speaking, he fell back from weakness and looked up at them bewildered, his mind once more losing itself. He then got up again, and said he must go.

"The young lady must be gone too," said the porter, winking at the guard, supposing that she existed but in imagination. "See, sir," as they supported him out to the platform, "all the passengers have cleared out."

They put him into a hansom, Godfrey being just able to give the address: Lady Ann Northstone's, Eaton Place. And the porter, at the suggestion of the guard was about to get in after him to see him safely to his destination, when a policeman, who had been looking on from the first, quietly pushed the man aside and took his place.

"I shall go with him myself," said he. "It is as much like a case of drugging as any I ever saw. Drive gently," he added to the driver.

The cab was going slowly out of the station, when another hansom came out, and rattled past it. By the light of the gas-lamps, Godfrey saw Mary Dixon seated in it; he bent forward, and in her sad eyes, as they met his, there lay a great terror. By her side, holding his hand on her shoulder, with what was evidently a firm grasp, sat the young doctor who had travelled up with Godfrey.

And whether it might have been something in the detaining grasp which struck on Godfrey's senses, or whether the side-face of the man, seen by Godfrey for the first time, betrayed him, he could not have told; but enlightenment flashed on his mind. That young, fair man, whose face had been familiar, and yet not familiar, was no other than the detective, Cattermole.

Godfrey sprang up from his seat with a great cry: but the policeman held him down.

"Quite off his head," thought the officer.

All kinds of questions were whirling through Godfrey's brain. That the present aspect of the young and slim man was his natural aspect, could admit of no doubt. He must have come to Croxham in disguise; padding his back and shoulders, and wearing iron-



grey hair on his head and face, to make himself look like a middle-aged man! But for what? How crafty these detectives were, and how could Mary or her mother hope to defend themselves from him?

"It's fearfully cold to-night," said he to the man beside him. His teeth were chattering, and he was shivering from head to foot.

"Yes, sir," said the policeman. But the weather was warm for the time of year, and he knew that the gentleman was only cold because he was ill. Turning as he gave his answer, and seeing that the shivering had suddenly ceased, and that some startling change had come over the sickly face, it struck him all at once that it was a dead man he was carrying home to his friends. He touched his arm, and Godfrey opened his eyes and shivered again.

"I beg pardon, sir; hadn't you better stop at a doctor's?"

"Doctor's! Oh, no. I'm all right, thank you; only rather done up."

Lady Ann Northstone's was an early, sober household; and Mrs. Penteith, mistress of it for the time being, was early also. When the cab stopped in Eaton Place, the lights of the hall and passages had been extinguished for the night, and everybody was gone upstairs. The policeman rang them down again, and Godfrey was helped into the sitting-room.

Mrs. Penteith came down in great alarm. The policeman detained her for a moment before she went into the room, to explain what he knew of the matter.

"He seems very ill indeed, ma'am," he whispered in conclusion. "I think a doctor ought to see him at once. I'll fetch one if it will be any accommodation to you—if you'll tell me who."

"Thank you; wait one moment," she answered.

Godfrey was lying back in the chair where they had placed him. He kissed his aunt affectionately, and asked her pardon for coming to her so unexpectedly, and in such a sick state.

"I didn't know where else to go to, Aunt Madge," said he. "The hotels——"

"My poor boy," she interrupted, bending over him with tears in her eyes, "how can you talk like that?—where should you go, but to me? Who in the whole world would welcome you so warmly as I, or nurse you so tenderly?"

"I know, I know," he murmured, getting faint again. "But it is only for to-night, you know, aunt. To-morrow, I——"

Godfrey did not conclude the sentence; he broke down. His head fell, his face turned whiter even than it had been before, and he looked like a dying man.

With streaming eyes, Mrs. Penteith availed herself of the friendly policeman's offer, and told him what medical man to fetch. Meanwhile a room was hastily prepared for Godfrey; and Mrs. Penteith's own maid, Dunning, a sour-faced woman who had been in her service twenty years, and was almost as much attached to the young fellow

as she was herself, persuaded Godfrey to get into his comfortable bed and sat watching him and telling him rather tartly to go to sleep, as if he were a boy of five sent to bed for being naughty.

The doctor came and saw Godfrey alone, and spoke with Mrs. Penteith before his departure. She went into the bed-room afterwards, and stood silently by Godfrey.

"I'm all right now, Aunt Madge. I've been ill lately, and the long journey knocked me up. I shall be off again to-morrow," added he, with an assumed sprightliness; which, from the mouth of that helpless figure, with wan face and hollow eyes, was as cheering as the ghastly smile of a skeleton.

As she passed her loving fingers through his hair and looked down upon him, he read in the kind grave face that she knew the truth about his condition, and that it was not favourable. He rolled his head uneasily on the pillow.

"That old man has been frightening you. I shall be all right to-morrow, aunt. You don't think I would have landed myself upon you if I had been seriously ill."

He meant to take himself off somehow, before she got up the next morning, and to go he did not yet know where. To some hotel perhaps.

"My poor boy," she whispered gently. "Someone has been treating you badly, I fear. You never doubted my love before."

His features contracted, and then relaxed, as with a sob of terrible pain, which seemed to thrill through his whole frame, he raised his hands to her compassionate, well-loved face, and smiled up at her.

"No no, I don't doubt it—heaven help me if I did! Oh Aunt Margaret, my very soul seems on fire. I think the sight of your dear old face has saved me from a fit of madness. Saved me! It—it was *he*, you know."

His hands fell, his eyes were glittering with fever. Mrs. Penteith saw how it was—that the trouble which beset him, of whatsoever nature it might be, had been too much for his brain. His reason was temporarily gone; his speech wandered incoherently. She tried to soothe him, but he did not know her.

The only influence that had any power over him in his delirium, was that of the sour-faced Dunning, who took the high ground of Christian indignation at his impious outbursts, and held him down with strong skinny arms, while she lectured and scolded him in a loud harsh voice, which perhaps, unconscious though he was, impressed him with the feeling that he was in the reverend hands of some energetic and muscular dignitary of the Church. At any rate, she succeeded in quelling his tendency to violence.

"A pretty thing to talk about in the hearing of two respectable women, and one of them your own aunt!" rebuked Dunning, upon hearing him mutter that something was as hot as a certain place. "I wonder you're not afraid of the floor opening and swallowing you up!

And you lying on a sick-bed and ought to be preparing yourself for heaven ; but it's little you'll see of that, Master Godfrey, if you keep your thoughts fixed so much on the other. Instead of bearing a little pain as a Christian should, you—What? Gone away and left you, has she? No, she hasn't; she's sitting beside you all the time.—Saw her with him in the cab? Good gracious, who are you talking about? Don't think any more about her, then, she isn't worth it. And what's her beauty worth if she's so bad? I'm ashamed to sit and hear you go on, sir."

But Dunning nursed him indefatigably all the same ; and when he apostrophised her in terms to which she was not accustomed, and implored her to kiss him, she swooped upon him and gave him a quick little peck with a glimmer in her sharp eyes which did not make her look any sweeter, but which, nevertheless, signified that there was nothing she could refuse to the boy whom she had smacked and soaped and made to say his prayers twenty years ago.

The exertion of body when he was not in a state to bear it, added to his mental perplexity and torment, had been too much for Godfrey Mayne. His recognition of Mr. Cattermole had served to upset what little equanimity was left to him ; and the doubt racking him now was—whether Mary was with him by mutual arrangement, or whether Cattermole had exercised his power, as a detective, to compel it. He remembered that Mary had been going away with him from Croxham *of her own free will*, as she had taken care to assure Godfrey : and now that Godfrey saw him as he was—a young and good-looking man—he knew not what to think, except that he was all the more dangerous.

With all this making havoc of his brain, Godfrey was not likely to lie like a lamb under the ministrations of his aunt and the injunctions of Dunning. But the night passed better than it had begun, and towards morning he fell asleep.

In a few days the fever had subsided, and Godfrey began to get well. Dunning, from being a devoted nurse, became a tyrant, claiming the privilege of an old servant to read aloud to him passages selected by herself from religious works that she found in Lady Ann Northstone's library and in her own, which she judged suitable to the case of a young man whose mind was certainly in a far from healthy state. Her mistress was aghast at this liberty, for although she prayed constantly that her darling nephew might be led to think more seriously of sacred things, she would never have dared to open the subject unasked with him, still less to storm him with extracts from "Steps and Stages on the Road to Glory," and to pause impressively and glare at him with penetrating fixity, as Dunning took upon herself to do, whenever she came to a passage which she thought particularly applicable.

Mrs. Penteith was sorry to see, too, that Godfrey took a questionable pleasure in these readings, and even indulged Dunning with a

nod, and "That's just my case, isn't it?" when she read any sentence with special emphasis.

"It isn't right to laugh at her, because she is in earnest, Godfrey," said she gently, one day when they were alone.

"What does it matter as long as I don't let her know I'm laughing, Aunt Margaret? I wouldn't hurt the good old thing's feelings for the world; she's working me a book-marker with a text about the lusts of the flesh on it, which I'm to put in every novel I read. There isn't much in the world I can laugh at now, aunt: let her preach at me, it won't do me any harm."

He searched the newspapers through as soon as he was able; but there was never a word upon the subject he feared to find. The past tragedy connected with Sir William Hunt's son found no mention in them. Mrs. Penteith had of course written to Mr. Mayne: who had sent back a long, confused account of the trouble things were in: his wife was ill in bed; his step-daughter had gone suddenly away, in defiance of his wishes, to join a Sisterhood in London; while the whole household had been thrown into a state of disorganisation and commotion through a search made by the police for some criminal who was supposed to have taken refuge in the Abbey; fortunately, before they had proceeded far in it, they discovered their mistake, and that it was another place which ought to have been searched. Mr. Mayne continued, in a deeply injured and complaining strain, to speak of Godfrey's inexplicable freak of taking himself off so unexpectedly and leaving no word behind him. He was of course sorry, he said, to hear of his illness, but if he would travel up to London or elsewhere before he was well, he must expect to suffer for it. Why his son should have gone, he was unable to understand; it was thought that the visit of the police must have scared him, his mind being weakened by illness and, consequently, his fears ready to be acted upon. Mr. Mayne concluded by asking, with cutting sarcasm, whether Godfrey had expected to be robbed or murdered, and that at twenty-five a boy ought to have got over being frightened by a few policemen.

Mrs. Penteith felt rather indignant at this letter and its aspersions on her nephew. Godfrey had given her no explanation of his sudden journey, but she had found out a great deal from his ravings while he was delirious. She did not press his confidence, she did not dare. He was now able to leave his room and breakfast with her in the boudoir on the same floor. She watched him one morning as he took up and opened a letter which was waiting for him on the table, directed in Elspeth's handwriting. But his face betrayed nothing but indifference, and when he had read it he tossed it carelessly down; then noticing his aunt's look of interest, he passed it to her. It was from Mrs. Thornhill.

"MY DEAR GODFREY,—We have just heard, by a letter from Mrs. Underwood, of the accident which happened to you the very day we

left home ; it has grieved us greatly. We were all also much touched to hear how you went up to town before you were fit to travel, in your anxiety to fulfil Mr. Thornhill's conditions. *Elspeth especially* ; who, as she may not write to you, has directed the envelope. Coniston is getting very cold and we shall probably return to Croxham sooner than we intended, and I hope we shall see you there before long. You need not trouble to answer this, as I dare say you are not well enough yet for much letter-writing. I hope you are taking good care of yourself, and that you are very temperate in your diet ; I know many doctors recommend stimulants, but I do not think they are good things, as they tend to cause inflammation. As I do not know your address in town, I send this to the Abbey to be forwarded.

"With kind regards from all, yours very sincerely,  
"JANE R. THORNHILL."

Mrs. Penteith put it down and took off her glasses in silence. When Godfrey looked at her again, he was surprised at her expression of face.

"Why, what's the matter, Aunt Margaret ?—you look so angry."

"That letter has put me rather out of temper, my dear."

"What, Mrs. Thornhill's ? I don't see anything in it to be angry about. She has not any special gift for composition, certainly."

"But it is so cold and commonplace. Is Elspeth like that ? If so —" She stopped.

"If so ?"

"I am not surprised—at anything. Are you still engaged to Elspeth, Godfrey ?"

"I don't quite know," said he, carelessly. "She has been away lately and I haven't thought about her. The Vicar accused me of want of fervour ; or, rather, I believe, of misdirected fervour, and suspended my engagement. But they seem satisfied now," added he in a hard voice.

There was a long silence. Godfrey got up from the table and walked with the help of a stick to the window. This short colloquy had roused the sleeping dogs of thought. His aunt watched him anxiously. When he came back, moody and miserable, to the fireplace, on one side of which she was sitting, his face relaxed a little, and he stretched himself on the hearthrug and laid his head on her lap like a boy.

"My poor, poor boy," said she tenderly, lifting his head with loving hands and looking anxiously into the face that had become worn and wan.

"You need not pity me, aunt. It is all my own fault. I've been playing with the matches like a naughty boy, and burnt myself."

Mrs. Penteith said nothing ; only stroked his hair, and waited.

"You know what has happened to me," said he presently, looking shrewdly up into her face. "At least you know a good deal, and



part of the rest I expect you guess. I have gone through the experience which you recommended to make a man of me ; but instead of that it has taken more than half the man away, and left me three parts incapacitated, mind and body. I feel sometimes that I would like never to set eyes on a woman again, for they are all false—you and Dunning are angels and don't count—and I have no ambition, and no talents to satisfy it if I had, and I find myself in a blind alley, without energy and without hope."

"What has she done to you, Godfrey, that girl? I know her name—Mary," continued Mrs. Penteith. "It was on your lips in your delirium, sometimes with reproach, more often with loving tenderness."

"Why she has done nothing," said he, raising himself and looking up at her with a flush on his face and glittering eyes; "absolutely nothing. The fault was all mine: I fell in love with her, and could not help myself. For she fulfilled my ideal, she stirred my imagination, she touched my heart, she fired my senses; I loved her better than my own soul; I would have died for her. All this is profane, is it not, aunt?—wicked, contemptible. But the end is unimpeachably moral. I thought she was in some great danger, I am not quite clear on that point yet; at any rate, I ran my head obstinately against a brick wall and persisted in trying to save her from an individual, from whom, as it turns out, I conclude she did not wish to be saved. After following her up here in the train to protect her, and intending to bring her to you, aunt, and to tell you all at the same time, I found that he had come up also, and I saw them both driving quietly away together in the same cab."

"Is she heartless, Godfrey?"

"Oh no. She has a heart; it is only that, in my opinion, she has not given it to the right person. She was so sorry for me when I was ill and so sweet to me, that I deceived myself into the belief that she cared for me—and I was madly happy. I could have been shot once a week to have had her there by me—" he stopped, his voice quivering. "Poor little thing! She used to sit by me and look at me like some beautiful child, her sweet, brown, loving eyes saying a hundred strange and wonderful things as they looked into mine. And her fragile white hands, which she used to leave in mine to please me, thrilled me with their soft touch just like fairy fingers, and when she kissed me, if she only let her lips rest for a moment on my forehead, she cast a spell over me that lifted me into another world."

"Kissed you, Godfrey! Did she do that?"

Godfrey was now sitting on the sofa, his head bent down on the cushion, so that his face was hidden. At the question he looked up.

"She did once or twice. I was very ill, you see, aunt; and she said she did it as my sister. But it had not a sisterly effect on me."

"No, no," murmured Mrs. Penteith. "What is the real truth of it all?" she went on to think: "what about the girl's own feelings? Godfrey," she said aloud, "you must forget her; it is best you should."



"Yes, when I can," he answered. "It may cost time to do it, though. She has taken from me every hope and interest I possessed in life."

He went out of the room as he spoke, carrying with him his pain and anguish. It was portrayed unmistakeably on his countenance, and Mrs. Penteith's heart ached as she gazed after him.

"If I could but restore him to happiness!" she sighed passionately; "he does not deserve to have been rendered miserable. *What about the girl?*"

When Godfrey came back to the boudoir, it was empty; his aunt had gone downstairs. He drew the easy chair before the fire, and sat down in dreary apathy. He could hear the front-door bell from time to time, and his aunt's voice below, and the footsteps of the servants going about the house, but nothing to rouse or to disturb him. Presently, however, he turned his head sharply and looked round the room as if in search of something; then he looked back at the fire as vacantly as before. But a minute later he raised his head and listened, with an eager, hungry look in his eyes. There was nothing to hear but Dunning's sharp voice on the stairs. He sprang up, however, restless and excited, and was at the door when it opened and Dunning came in with beef-tea and toast upon a tray.

"Now what is the good of our wearing ourselves to skin-and-bone nursing you, Master Godfrey, if you can't be left to yourself five minutes but you must be pottering about and trying to get your knee inflamed again?" cried she. "I knew what it would be if we let you get up! You sit down there, sir, and eat this, and don't let me catch you walking about again."

He obeyed meekly, but spoke as he sat down.

"I say, Dunning, didn't I hear the front-door bell just now?"

"I dare say you did; it's been going all the morning. The people Mrs. Penteith helps for Lady Ann come on a Wednesday morning. Some of 'em are gentle-folks who've seen better days."

"But just now, that last ring: who came in then?"

"Oh, that was a young lady; a stranger."

"A stranger!" he cried excitedly, springing up and spilling his beef-tea.

"Good gracious, what's the matter?" exclaimed Dunning.

"But who was it? Did you hear the name?"

"Yes, I did, and the name was Davenant," said Dunning. "A Miss Davenant; come about the Home Mission."

Godfrey sat down again, disappointed, and stared into the fire. Dunning stood over him to watch the consumption of the beef-tea; which Godfrey took; and then, finding he was not in a fit state to receive a word in season, she left the room with the empty cup and tray, sighing over his unregenerate state.

"Desperately wicked of him!" pronounced Dunning. "And all,

I reckon, because he got out of me that it was a *young* lady who was below !”

Godfrey could no longer sit still ; his apathy had changed into intense restlessness. He turned and twisted himself in his chair, he walked about ; at last he opened the door and listened. As he did so, he heard the front door close, and his aunt's old butler come back from showing somebody out. Godfrey limped across the landing and down the stairs to the drawing-room, where he found Mrs. Penteith just shutting her work-table drawer. She started on seeing him.

“ Oh, Godfrey, you should not walk about so much ; you ought not to have come down,” said she anxiously.

But he had advanced to the middle of the room with an eager light in his eyes. “ She has been here ; she has been here !” he cried. “ I know it, it was Mary Dixon. Oh, aunt, why did you not let me see her ? ”

“ My dear boy ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Penteith, startled at his excitement. “ It was not Miss Dixon indeed. Come to the window and look ; she cannot be out of sight yet.”

She threw open the window and he looked hurriedly out. But whoever the visitor might have been, Mary was not to be seen. He drew in his head, not in the least satisfied.

“ I tell you I can find out the very chair she sat on,” said he, on fire with excitement still. And he did throw himself into the very compartment of the ottoman on which the visitor had rested.

Mrs. Penteith looked bewildered. “ It is a most curious mistake of yours, Godfrey. Miss Davenant, instead of being a beautiful, well-dressed woman, such as you describe Miss Dixon to be, is insignificant and poorly attired, with nothing striking about her.”

“ Poorly attired ! ” echoed Godfrey, his face contracting with pain.

“ Now listen, and I will tell you all about it. Miss Davenant is a lady who saw you on your journey ; and when you arrived at the terminus she, knowing who you were, was much concerned to see you looking so very ill. Hearing this address given, she called to enquire after you. She called last week also, but did not then come in.”

“ But she has left a note for me ? She must have left *something* ? ”

“ She left no note.” Mrs. Penteith seemed to hesitate a little.

Godfrey stumbled across to her work-table. “ What were you doing here when I came in, aunt ? He pulled the drawer out and took from among the wools and canvas a plain card, on which was written ‘ Miss Davenant. ’ ”

Godfrey laughed painfully. “ This tells it, aunt : it is Mary Dixon's own handwriting. Why, *why* should she be calling herself Davenant ? ”

Mrs. Penteith could scarcely believe that the grave, sad-faced, pale young woman who had just left her could be the brilliant Mary Dixon, the lovely White Witch who had taken hearts by storm and enslaved her nephew hopelessly. She concluded that there must be some mistake.

"What made you think it was she, Godfrey?"

"I hardly know. But I believe I felt her presence in the house," he answered dreamily. "And as soon as I came in here I detected the faint perfume she uses either about her hands or her handkerchiefs or her dresses—I don't know what it is; like violets, I think; but I should know she was near if I met with it at the ends of the earth."

"I didn't notice that she used perfume."

"I don't believe anybody would notice it but myself," said he, and he leant back in the seat for some time in silence. "Aunt Margaret," said he at last, "will you lend me the brougham after luncheon?"

Mrs. Penteith assented sorrowfully. For she saw that the spell which had been cast upon him was as strong as ever, that his peace and his happiness were still in the fragile, cruel little hands of the White Witch.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### IN HYDE PARK.

It was on this same Wednesday afternoon that Godfrey Mayne left his aunt's house for the first time since his illness, with the fixed intention of finding out Miss Dixon's hiding-place. In hiding she must be, he considered. She was hiding from him, and also from his father: for Mr. Mayne had complained in a recent letter that the address of the Sisterhood was kept from him, lest (as he supposed) he should journey to it and snatch Mary away by force—which he meant to do, in spite of her mother, the moment he got hold of it.

It was ten days now since their arrival in town: and Godfrey wanted to know what Mary had been doing all that while—which seemed to him like ten weeks—and where she was, and where Cattermole was: and why she was, as it appeared, calling herself Miss Davenant.

He was carried away in Mrs. Penteith's comfortable carriage, having given his orders to the servants on the box. "Great St. Helen's, Bishopsgate."

Godfrey was going, first of all, to see Mr. Thorn: a solicitor, and Miss Dixon's acting trustee, a member of a firm whose offices were in Great St. Helen's. He knew that much. Mary had spoken of him while she was at the Abbey and sometimes heard from him.

Godfrey was set down at the right place and admitted to the lawyer's presence. Mr. Thorn was a thin, worn, restless man, with the bright, searching, dreamy grey eyes of an artist. His hands, never still, wandered from lip to chin, across his wide forehead, through his wavy hair, during the whole of the interview. Nature had made him a musician; circumstances a lawyer. He knew Godfrey's name as that of a member of the Lancashire family in which Mary had lately lived, and waited for him to state the object of his visit.

"I am come to ask if you can give me Miss Dixon's present address," said Godfrey. "I have been ill since I left Croxham, and have not been able to go out. My father, from whom I heard this morning, does not mention in his letter where she is staying, though he has charged me with some messages for her. So, knowing your name as one of her trustees, I have ventured to call, to ask if you would be kind enough to help me."

"I am sorry to say that is not in my power," said the little man. "Croxham Abbey is the only address I have."

Godfrey's penetration was seldom at fault where Mary was concerned. He knew, while the solicitor answered him in the frankest manner, that there was some clue to be had here, if he could only get hold of it.

"I am sorry to have troubled you to no purpose," said he. "Mary always spoke of you with so much respect and confidence as a friend of her father's, that I thought she would be sure to have called on you."

The piercing grey eyes looked at him, and dropped on to the blotting-paper on which Mr. Thorn was busily drawing fantastic things with a dry pen.

"I will tell you frankly why I am so anxious to see her," continued Godfrey, pulling his moustache. "I have reason to believe she is in trouble about—about something; and that she may be hiding from some of her friends. I know she has money of her own, but I fear it may not be adequate to her present needs. The marriage of her mother with my father enables me to stand, as may be said, in the relation of a brother to her. I, therefore, hope she would have no scruple in allowing me to help her out of any difficulty she might be in."

He spoke very quietly, but his soul shone through his grey eyes and made his grave words eloquent and pleading. The lawyer read him like a book, with sympathy as well as intelligence. Mary had, indeed, called upon him the day after her arrival in town, and had let fall a few words about this young fellow which had given the lawyer a key to understanding him.

"You are not, I believe, aware of the full extent of that difficulty, or even of its nature, Mr. Mayne?" said he, gravely.

"No, I am not," frankly replied Godfrey. "And if only I could get her out of it, I assure you I should not much care what its nature was."

"I will tell you this much: that no amount of money could help her out of it, nor any effort of yours, or indeed, of any man's. Except, perhaps, one," he added, rather grimly.

"But at least money can make life easier; and she has been accustomed always to the comforts it gives."

"Are you aware to what purpose your money would be applied?" interrupted Mr. Thorn.

"I should not even ask," said Godfrey. "I only beg you to oblige me by transmitting it to her, wherever she may be, without mentioning my name at all. If you would send it as an advance of her own money."

"I am sorry that I must decline to do so," again interposed the lawyer: and I will tell you why. On her arrival in town, Miss Dixon did call upon me: her object was to endeavour to induce me to comply with a request of hers, which I had already refused by letter while she was at the Abbey. Finding me impervious, as I was obliged to be—and, upon my word, the ridiculous ideas that women entertain of business amazes me!" broke off Mr. Thorn. "A child would hardly have been so silly as to ask me to do what Mary Dixon asked."

"Yes—but please go on," cried Godfrey.

"Well, finding that was of no use, she then begged me to advance her some money, having already spent what was due to her this year; but, knowing the purpose to which it would be applied, I refused."

"Is she well off!" asked Godfrey.

"She has the interest of five thousand pounds: two hundred and fifty pounds yearly. When she shall be twenty-five—she is as yet more than two years short of that—she comes into the whole sum, and can throw it all away, if she so pleases, on the following day. Until then ——— no."

"You will not be the means of conveying money to her from me?"

Mr. Thorn shook his head. "To advance her more money," he said, "whether yours, or her own, or mine, would not contribute to her happiness, but to her ruin. It would all be sunk in the same old quicksand; and if she does not mind she will fall into it at last herself. Take my advice, Mr. Godfrey Mayne: keep your money in your pocket, and do not waste it on encouraging the quixotic caprices of a rash and self-willed woman."

Godfrey rose, with the same light of an immovable resolution burning steadily in his eyes. "Thank you for your advice, Mr. Thorn. It is not my fault that I cannot follow it."

"One moment, sir. When a man is so bent upon one particular course of action as I see you are, such a trifle as my refusal to help you does not stand long in his way. Perhaps the fact that Miss Dixon herself begged me not to give you any information as to her movements in case of your applying to me, may have some influence with you."

"It will not prevent my finding her out and assuring myself that she is in safety and that she wants nothing. How can I sit still and eat and drink and sleep while I know there is some mystery hanging over her, sapping out her life and happiness, driving her from her home and from the very people who are ready to love and cherish her?" he asked vehemently.



"I think she would have been wiser to confide in you more than she has done," quietly remarked the lawyer; "but she gave me reasons for her reticence, and I am bound to respect her wishes in the matter. If, however, you do succeed in discovering her, I should advise you to insist upon a full explanation of her position before offering to assist her in any way."

Godfrey laughed shortly. "She knows very well that I can insist on nothing with her."

"Not even when I tell you that is your only chance of doing her any good? Look here, Mr. Godfrey Mayne: I think so well of your disinterestedness that I would freely help you to find her if I knew where she was, but I do not. You may say, why don't I find her for myself: well, because I have not the right to interfere in defiance of her wishes, and because I am very angry with her."

"Then it is true that you cannot give me her address?" cried Godfrey wistfully.

"No, I cannot," said Mr. Thorn. "But I can give you that of a lady who may know something of her; who may, even now, be striving to save Mary from the consequences of her own folly."

He looked about for a card, and went on talking while he wrote upon it. "That girl has thrown away the most brilliant chances that a woman could wish for, for the most absurd and unreasonable infatuation that ever turned a clever young head. She has a voice that would make her fortune; training would have enabled her to enter upon an artist's career," and as Mr. Thorn spoke, his manner changed to enthusiasm, the lawyer was merged in the musician. "Her father, my good friend, was a successful man and could provide for her; but what of that?—as I often said to him, when we were wrangling over his prejudices; I striving to persuade him that it was his duty to give such a talent to the world, a sin if he withheld it. Well, well—she went, herself, and made havoc of her life at the outset, threw her career to the winds; and has entailed more trouble than you suspect, sir, upon those connected with her."

Mr. Thorn checked himself, and looked fixedly at the card on which he had been writing.

"She might take it up yet," he continued, his eyes growing brighter and more dreamy, while his nervous hand wandered over his forehead and over his wavy hair faster than ever; "I do not see that it is too late. The career of a successful artiste brings the greatest happiness possible in this world—one of those sweet and wonderful singers that are so rare. Where can you lose yourself but in listening to these intoxicating melodies? You forget your troubles: your wife, your creditors, your business perplexities, your ——"

Again Mr. Thorn stopped. He had suddenly remembered himself, and gave Godfrey the card with a laugh.

"If you were to come to me in my lawyer's capacity, I should not treat you to these rhapsodies," said he. "There is the address of the



lady who can, if she chooses, enlighten you on a good many points concerning Mary Dixon's history."

The card bore the name and direction :

"Lady Davenant,  
Wandsworth Common."

"I believe they call it Tooting," observed Mr. Thorn. "But I have given you the name of the station where you should get out. The house is close by ; anybody can direct you to it."

Godfrey thanked him, and left. He recognised the name, Davenant, as being the one Mary had called herself by that morning at his aunt's.

It was past four o'clock, and he considered whether he should go to Wandsworth to-day ; some instinct which he did not understand prompted a wish to stay in Town, but it was so vague, so unreasonable, that he concluded it was only the result of the fatigue he began to feel creeping over him. He therefore told the coachman to drive to Victoria. As he passed along the Strand, however, he found himself growing so faint and stupid, that he stopped the carriage, got out, and went into a café for a glass of madeira. As he was drinking it, he caught the sound of a man's voice he thought he knew. It came from a small, inner room, raised a couple of steps above the outer one, divided from it only by a curtain half-way across. The voice was raised to address the waiter.

Godfrey crossed the outer room so that he could see the people in the inner one. There were only two, a man and a woman, seated facing each other at the same table. The man had his back towards Godfrey, but the latter could see that he had curly chestnut hair, and that he wore fashionable attire. The lady was handsome, and quietly but well dressed. They were talking in too low a tone for Godfrey to hear the voice again, but he was keenly anxious to see the man's face. In another minute their chairs moved ; Godfrey hastened out to the carriage, took his seat in one of its corners, partially drew the blinds, and told the servants to wait. The lady and gentleman came quickly out and walked away up the Strand : but yet Godfrey had not seen the man's face, for many passengers were passing up and down the pavement at the time. He was slightly built, and of middle height, and there was nothing about him that he absolutely recognised : but Godfrey could not divest himself of the belief that the voice had been the soft voice of Mr. Cattermole. If so, he was now appearing in another disguise. Was the man an actor as well as a detective ?

Godfrey put his head out to speak to the servants. "Did you see that lady and gentleman come out ?" he asked. "She is tall ; dressed in black. Keep them in sight, and drive on gently."

The coachman followed them to the turning opposite Charing Cross, past St. Martin's Church and the National Gallery, up the Haymarket as far as Charles Street, along that and to the right up

Waterloo Place, where they stopped at the Pall Mall restaurant, appearing to hesitate whether to enter it or not. It was then that Godfrey caught sight of the man's face, and felt savage with disappointment. For it was that of a young man with a silky chestnut moustache, and a mild, uninteresting young face. He was on the point of ordering the carriage home in irritation, when some movement, some gesture, he hardly knew what, on the part of the man he had been watching, woke his attention again and made him say instead, "Follow them still."

They went along Piccadilly and into the Burlington Arcade. There Godfrey got out; dismissed the brougham, with a message to Mrs. Penteith that he might not be home till late; and, allowing time for the couple he was watching to get well into the Arcade, he followed. There were enough people about for him to be able to keep them in sight without fear of attracting their own observation, and when after sauntering along to the very end, they turned back, he slipped into a glove-shop, instinctively asked for sixes, twenty-five button length, and turned them over, with his eyes carefully watching the passers-by until the two he waited for passed. They looked in at the window, but did not notice Godfrey peeping from behind a barricade of many-coloured and fantastically-worked gloves. He noted the man well, and as he turned to the counter and paid for his purchase, the pretty ogling girl who served him noticed that a strange change came over the face of her eccentric customer. He wanted to be again in pursuit; for in spite of the wonderful alterations and the get-up of the silky chestnut hair and moustache, and of the darkened eyebrows and eyelashes, he had recognised the detective, Cattermole.

He watched them from the door of the shop as they went out into Piccadilly and got into a hansom. Godfrey jumped into another and told the man to follow. They stopped at Blanchard's, got out and dismissed the cab: so did Godfrey. They sat down to a table to dine; Godfrey chose one where he could only be seen by the lady, and dined and read the papers, taking care not to appear to notice them. He studied her appearance and manner. She had an innocent face, sleepy eyes, and dark hair. Her manners were shy and quiet, her voice was low, and her attention scarcely wandered from her companion, whose eye and hand she watched as a dog watches that of an ill-tempered master. When they left the place, and got into another hansom, Godfrey followed again. They stopped at a house in Brompton, with "Apartments" over the door. Mr. Cattermole went in with a latch-key, telling the driver to wait; and both he and the lady went upstairs.

Godfrey waited at a distance. Presently, seeing the man come out of the house in evening-dress, and drive off alone, he dismissed his hansom, and knocked at the door. He had seen the blinds of the first floor drawn down and lights introduced, so he asked the servant who opened the door to inquire if the lady on the first floor could

spare a few minutes to see him. The girl stared at him, went upstairs at once however, and he, having advanced well into the passage, had the satisfaction of hearing himself described in a loud whisper as a tall, handsome gentleman, looking frightful ill.

Returning, after a little whispered conversation, the girl showed him up into a tiny front room, overcrowded with gaudy furniture; and very shortly the lady came in through the folding doors. Her plump, babyish, pretty face was rather worn; and, commanding though she was in figure, it was apparent that she was nothing but a weak, helpless creature, led by every impulse, incapable of self-government, and at the mercy of any will that might find it worth while to guide her. Godfrey read this nature easily while she was saying that her husband was out. Godfrey said he wished to see her husband, and enquired when, next day, he was likely to be at home. She did not know; she seemed curious about her visitor, her eyes wandered shyly from his face to the carpet and back again while he talked, and at last she asked awkwardly where he had met her husband.

"It was in the country, a short time ago," answered Godfrey.

This answer roused her to sudden anger; it blazed in her long dark eyes, and brought two bright spots of colour to her cheeks. She lost her shyness, and broke out vehemently:

"Yes, yes, that was when he left me here by myself for weeks—and would not disclose to me where he was; but I know as well as possible he was after somebody or other. Yes, yes, and I believe it is the same girl I have seen him with twice—he has brought her to London—oh, I know his old tricks. He'll be going off with her one of these fine days, and leave me, his lawful wedded wife, that has worked and slaved and cared for him, and followed him half over the world, to starve! She's got money, I think, and that's why. For money he'd sell his soul."

Godfrey, suppressing his emotion, listened to this outburst quietly.

"I don't suppose it is as bad as that," said he. "He would never have the heart to leave you, after all you have done for him."

"Oh, wouldn't he! You don't know him, sir. Why, during the year I've been married to him he has left me three times; and each time has only returned to me when he'd spent every penny, and had to come back to my earnings. I'm a singer, sir, by profession, and a good one too, though I say it that shouldn't; and I never need be at fault for a profitable engagement in America."

Godfrey was looking at her curiously. She mistook the gaze.

"Are you thinking I am not married—that I am like some of those girls that run after him?" she cried. "Wait a minute."

She sprang up, swept past him into the next room, and came back with her certificate of marriage in her hand. Godfrey read it: it was celebrated in New York, between Edward Grey and Susan Jane Waters. The date was October of the year before.

"Is that his true name?" she asked eagerly. "At times I fancy it is not."

"I do not know," cautiously replied Godfrey. "It may be. I know nothing of your husband's antecedents."

"The villain! But I'll be even with him. He is gone to meet that girl to-night; I *know* he is; He meets her in Hyde Park: twice that I've followed him I've seen him with her."

"Will you tell me about it, and what it is you mean," said Godfrey. "I am as much interested in that young lady as you can be. At least if she be the one I think she is."

Mrs. Grey, obeying her angry dictates, told him what she knew. Being curious as to her husband's movements, she had twice followed him when he left the house in the evening, and tracked the cab he was in, she being in another, to the Marble Arch in Hyde Park. There she had seen him walking by the side of a young lady—or a girl, as she phrased it—who wore a close bonnet and kept her veil down.

"I'll take you there now, if you like," she cried eagerly; "that is, if you'll undertake not to make a scene—for if he caught me watching him he might kill me; he has pointed his revolver at me once or twice when he was in a passion."

Godfrey thought that this hot-headed, impulsive lady was a great deal more likely to make a "scene" than he was: he assured her that she might trust his discretion, and she ran into her room to put her bonnet on, as gleeful as a child at the prospect of a little dangerous excitement instead of the dull evening at home to which her husband had condemned her. Meanwhile Godfrey thought over all she had told him, and considered what he should do.

He handed her into a hansom; Mrs. Grey directing the man to drive to the Marble Arch as fast as his horse would go.

She was much impressed by the quiet courtesy of Godfrey's manner towards her, and she rambled on with confidences concerning her wrongs and her husband's unkindness in going out to places of amusement at night and leaving her at home. "He is going to one to-night," she said; "I know it by his having dressed; and I shouldn't wonder but he'll take that other with him!"

"Is your husband an actor?" he asked. "He can get himself up cleverly."

"Yes that he can," she answered, in a tone of admiration. "He can be an old man to-day, and a young man to-morrow; he can be dark and fierce as a Spanish bandit in the morning, and like a fair, frank school boy in the afternoon. No, sir, he is not an actor, but he knows all their tricks, and can use them at will."

They got out at the Marble Arch. Mrs. Grey turned into Hyde Park, walked a short distance, and fell back behind the trees.

"We are a little late," she whispered to Godfrey; "but there they are!" and he looked out eagerly.

Mr. Cattermole, young, slender, and fashionable, was walking slowly towards them on the path, buttoned up in his light overcoat; Mary Dixon, her face hidden by her veil and close bonnet, walked by his side, apart. He had his head turned towards her, and was speaking vehemently, but in a low tone.

"Look at that person behind them, in a dark cloak," whispered Mrs. Grey to Godfrey.

Godfrey carried his sight past the couple it was so hungrily fixed on, and saw a tall, angular, strong woman of middle age, apparently following them at a respectful distance.

"I think it must be the girl's mother, on the watch unknown to them," said Mrs. Grey. "I noticed her the first time I came, and I noticed her the second time, and now she's here again; so I know she must belong to them in some way.—Good heavens, sir! what are you going to do? Have you forgotten your promise to me?"

The couple had halted for a moment by the Marble Arch, apparently about to separate: and Godfrey, in the moment's mad impulse, was starting forward to confront them. But Mrs. Grey's alarmed words and her detaining hand upon his arm, recalled him.

"I beg your pardon," he said with a groan. "Yes, I did for an instant forget it."

"He would shoot me as soon as look at me; and I did it out of kindness to you," bewailed poor Mrs. Grey.

"Yes, yes," spoke Godfrey, reassuringly.

So his opportunity was lost. Mary crossed the street quickly, and was joined on the other side by the woman in the dark cloak. Mr. Cattermole watched them away and then hailed a passing hansom and was driven down Oxford Street.

To attempt to track Mary then was impossible; she had disappeared: moreover, Godfrey was physically incapable of it. "Let me see you into a cab," said he to Mrs. Grey; "and I thank you for what you have done for me."

"I'll see *you* into one first, sir," said she significantly; "you look as if in another moment you'll not have the strength to get into one. There, there's two cabs waiting; I'll call them both."

Godfrey was unable to say yes or no. She helped him into one, and he gave the direction to the driver; while she got into the other, and was driven away.

"I could not do more than I did, in the face of my promise to that poor woman," reasoned Godfrey in his terrible disappointment. "To-morrow I will try Lady Davenant."

*(To be continued.)*



## A VISIT TO MARY COWDEN-CLARKE.

BY HELEN ZIMMERN.

NEXT to the sunshine of child smiles, and the music of child laughter, is there anything in life more charming and attractive than the society of the old who have kept their hearts unwrinkled ; and especially old people who have known intimately the best and finest minds of their day ; old people who can sing at threescore with the American poet George Calvert :

" I am not old and will not be ;  
I daily grow, and joys are piled  
About my life."

Of such Mary Cowden-Clarke (née Mary Novello) is a rare and notable example, and I never availed myself of the proud privilege of visiting her without feeling that I was entering a sanctuary of which she was the priestess, keeping alive with sacred care the memories of great departed spirits.

It is in Italy that Mrs. Cowden-Clarke has elected to spend the closing years of a busy and useful life : Italy, " Europe's Eden," where the old, shipwrecked, and weary may find the rest they seek in vain, in the surging turbulent life of England or America ; and it is in Genoa, one of Italy's many fascinating spots, that the family Novello, returning in the second generation to their paternal home, have pitched their tent. Those who have not visited that proud, queenly city, self-styled *La Superba*, " whose marble round the bosom of the sea its arm enclasps," are probably weary of hearing its beauties praised ; while for those who know it well, " that of which the heart is full, the mouth runeth over," and they cannot cease from extolling its varied and luxurious beauty, its blue sweep of bay, its hills that girdle the city, its palaces, its orange groves and orange plantations. As for views, there is no city in Europe that I know which can compare with Genoa. Every house, every garret boasts a vista.

It is in the fairest, and for views most fortunate point, that is situated the Villa Novello, standing, as it does, upon a promontory that juts out to sea, commanding, on the one side, the wide sweep of harbour, and the curving, graceful mountain-flanked coast, where bay threads itself on bay, far away down to Nice ; and on the other, the Ligurian chain of hills, closed by Porto Fino's sphinx-like rock, of ever varying amethystine hue, while at the back expands " the wide opaque blue breadth of sea without a break," affording a feeling of immensity by the thought that here nothing intervenes 'twixt us and the far distant continent of Africa.

One of those narrow, tortuous, cobble-stone paved *vicoli*, mere mule tracks, that thread between high stone walls, and jealously hide



from view the gardens they skirt, so common in Genoa, leads us up to a tall iron gate, flanked by marble pilasters inscribed with the name Villa Novello. As we turn the handle, the gate admits us with a musical sound, that gives advertisement to the lodge-keeper of our approach. It may be mere accident, it probably is, but it always tickled my fancy that the handles of this Italian *cancelli* giving admission to an Anglo-Italian home, should bear impressed on them the Lion and Unicorn of England. It seems as though the very portal gave the key-note to the dual patriotism of the establishment it guards.

The inner approach to the villa is bordered by a low hedge of red and pink monthly roses, which I have never seen out of bloom ; and as we follow its path, there comes to view the grand sweep of harbour, the noble lighthouse uprising from its rocky bed, the hills on which are perched the marble palaces of Genoa, the forts that crown and guard her peaks, while immediately around extends the carefully tended garden of the Villa Novello, where flowers are never out of bloom, and trees are ever green.

A word about the inmates ere we cross the threshold of the wide, low house, within whose walls three erst useful servants of the British public are placidly living out their lives ; namely : Alfred Novello, the publisher, the first to purvey cheap music to the mass, the singer and admirable teacher Sabilla Novello, and last, but not least, their now widowed sister, Mary Cowden-Clarke, whose rare good fortune it was never to leave her paternal roof.

Those who remember Charles Lamb's delightful essay "On Ears" may perchance recall a passage wherein reference is made to evenings spent at the house of a Catholic friend who by his music "converted his drawing-room into a chapel and his weekdays into Sundays." This friend was Vincent Novello, in whose sitting-room in Oxford Street, London, were, early this century, to be met persons great in literature and art. Here could be seen Keats, with his picturesque head leaning against the organ, one foot raised on his knee and smoothed beneath his hands ; Shelley, with his poet eyes and brown curls ; Leigh Hunt, with his jet-black hair and expressive mouth ; Lamb, with his spare figure and earnest face ; Varley, Copley Fielding, and what more names posterity cherishes.

The children grew up among music and literature ; little wonder, therefore, that their love for these things grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength. So early was Mary Novello taken to the play that she was young enough to ride home, sleepy and tired, on her father's shoulder, yet already educated enough to appreciate seeing some of the best performers of the day act in plays that were not cribs from the French nor nauseous burlesques, but good genuine pieces of dramatic work.

Wealth was not abundant in the home, and children were, so that the eldest little daughter had early to play the housewife. She re-

members, as though it were to-day, one night of joyful surprise, when the father, coming home tired with a long day's teaching, bade his little daughter get Shakespeare, and read him "Much Ado about Nothing," while he eat the dinner she had prepared and laid, the mother being busy with a new baby; and then as a reward for his daughter's good-housekeeping, telling her to put on her bonnet, and he would take her to see Kemble play Benedick.

At the early age of nineteen she married Charles Cowden-Clarke, a man of letters and lecturer, school fellow and friend of Keats, who came to live in the newly-adopted family that was to become entirely his own. This marriage, which proved childless, strengthened Mary Novello's ever existent desire to make writing her profession; and now, in concert with her fondly-loved husband, now alone, she tried her hand in various branches of literature, writing, among other works, a romance, "The Iron Cousin," that on its appearance elicited the enthusiastic praises of Leigh Hunt.

In a letter now lying before me, in which she speaks of her life, she tells me that she began writing at sixteen, and adds: "I have written and am still writing almost daily ever since, with more or less pleasure to my readers, with perpetual and zestful happiness to myself." To enumerate all her contributions to literature would more than fill our space; and able as these are, it is chiefly with those that deal with Shakespeare that her name will ever be connected, and remembered as long as the world remembers that bard of bards. "When you meet Shakespeare in Paradise you must expect a kiss, and he will give it you even if your husband is by," writes Douglas Jerrold, in his jocular way, to Mrs. Cowden-Clarke, in a letter I have had the privilege to see, wherein he thanks her for the gift of her invaluable "Concordance"—that work more valuable far than the hundreds of commentaries that have been penned upon the Swan of Avon. Truly a noble monument of industry and indomitable perseverance, which it took twelve years to compile, and four to correct for the press. A Herculean labour unintermittingly performed, often in sickness and trouble.

Like so many great things, it owed its genesis to a mere accident. It was in July, 1829, when Mrs. Cowden-Clarke was sitting at the breakfast table of some friends in Somersetshire, that regret was expressed that there existed no concordance to Shakespeare. Eager in everything, Mrs. Cowden-Clarke resolved then and there that she would write this desired concordance; and that very forenoon, while joining her friends in a walk through the fields, she took with her a volume of the poet and a pencil, and jotted down the first lines of her book under B.

"Boatswain, have care," *Temp.* I., 1, &c.

The following is an account she gave me of the mode of writing she ultimately adopted for this work. "I had a separate portfolio for each letter of the alphabet; these portfolios were ranged round in

front of me on my writing-table. I opened my father's copy of Shakespeare at my side, having two pages in view at a time. I took the first word that presented itself at the top of the first page (we will suppose this word to begin with "a") and entered each word commencing with the same letter on the MS. page which was headed by the word, and placed it in its respective portfolio; going thus alphabetically through the whole of the two spread-open pages, until every salient word therein was duly culled and registered. I generally worked from four to six hours per day, and always before and after breakfast till dinner-time; so that the outside of the house during those hours was little known to me, and we usually took our exercise recreation of an evening. Happy—supremely happy—were the hours then! Side by side, one working at this book, the other writing his Lectures on our poetic idol."

When she had got half way she was told that some other person was engaged on the same task. Sadly, very sadly, she packed up all her portfolios and materials, resolved to adandon the task, thinking, with native modesty, that the unknown rival would surely do it better. She told me that to this day she can recall her feelings while kneeling on the floor and pushing away the large packet under her bed for safe keeping, for they lived in small quarters then and space had to be economised. Joyful, very joyful, was she when she learned the rumour was unfounded, and she could haul her packet forth again. Some idea of the vastness of the undertaking may be gained from the circumstance that the paper alone required for the work cost over £5.

From this careful study of Shakespeare resulted some original works, of which the most notable is the "Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines," in which, with ingenuity and intuitive imagination, Mrs. Cowden-Clarke has striven to trace the probable antecedents in the history of some of Shakespeare's women; to conjecture what might have been the first imperfect dawns of those whom he has shown us in the meridian blaze of perfection. A bold venture, truly, this series of fifteen tales, and only justified by its wonderful success. They were first brought out as separate stories. "Portia, of Belmont" was the first written and was the one that first occurred to the authoress, conducing to the production of the whole series. This is how Mrs. Cowden-Clarke explained their genesis to me:

"I had been brooding over Hazlitt's unjust words: 'Portia is not a very great favourite with us; she has a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her which is very unusual in Shakespeare's women, but which, perhaps, was a proper qualification for the office of a "civil doctor," which she undertakes and executes so successfully.' I thought how it was probable that she had gained her legal knowledge from her 'cousin' the 'learned Bellario,' a doctor of laws, and one on whose judgment the Duke of Venice so much relies that he sends for him from Padua for the trial of Shylock the Jew; and thus I sketched her antecedent history."

It was in 1861 that the sisters, with husband and brother, settled in Genoa, the Cowden-Clarks, "married lovers," as they were called to the end, after more than fifty years of wedlock, occupying themselves with literature, reading, working, thinking in unison; Sabilla obliged to refrain from teaching from delicacy of throat and susceptibility to damp, ever active in promoting the cause of good music; Alfred, with engineering skill and fertile invention, turning a ramshackle old house into a quaint and liveable abode, and converting an untended area of ground into a most variegated and delicious garden. To this house flock all the eminent visitors that pass through Genoa, glad to become acquainted with the woman who still preserves the gracious, courtly, old-world manner which our modern life of fret and hurry is fast rendering extinct; a charm only equalled by her mental vivacity, her cordial, frank and generous address, the zest and charm of her conversation, and, above all, by her perfect womanly gentleness. She is truly a sweet type of womanhood in its noblest expression.

It is on Sunday afternoons that the Villa Novello is opened to receive visitors, birds of passage and residents; but the doors are never closed to friends whenever the inmates are well and not too busy with their various avocations. A visit to these rooms affords a biographical synopsis of the life of Mrs. Cowden-Clarke and her gifted family. Having crossed the threshold, we find ourselves in a marble paved Italian hall; a flight of steps of alternate grey and white marble conducts us into another hall, which is the picture gallery of the family. Here hang the paintings, original and copies, executed by the brother, Edward Novello, who did not live to fulfil the promise of his youth. Here, too, hangs a fine portrait of Baron Poerio, one of the many martyrs to Italian freedom; a likeness of Garibaldi painted by Giovanni Mazzini, and a spirited sketch, by Emma Novello, of Richard Cobden, one of the best likenesses ever taken of the reformer.

In this hall, too, stands the testimonial chair America presented to Mrs. Cowden-Clarke, and of which she is justly proud. "Her throne," as her nieces called it when they were children, adding that "the ladies and gentlemen of America had put their pocket money together to buy it for auntie." The names of those who subscribed to it include the brightest and best of those alive in the States in 1851, Longfellow, Washington Irving, Willis, Allibone, Bryant. But what gave Mrs. Cowden-Clarke almost as much pleasure as the chair itself was that not only Daniel Webster's name was included among these, but that the American gentlemen who called into life the testimonial had the happy thought to send her the identical gold coin that Webster had subscribed, and that she, therefore, enjoyed the sentiment of touching what had passed through his hands.

To sentiment of this nature Mrs. Cowden-Clarke is keenly alive, and in her store closets of treasures she guards many such memorials. But she does not guard them so that others may not enjoy them also.

Enjoyment to Mrs. Cowden-Clarke is only half enjoyment if unshared. She is ready at any moment to produce her treasures, to show you the soft brown curl that was cut from Shelley's head ; the lock that was his wife's, the other that grew on Mary Wolstonecraft's restless brain ; the piece of grizzled jet black hair that once adorned Leigh Hunt's head ; a stiff, stubbly grey lock, that it does not astonish us to hear came from the head of Beethoven ; a softer, gentle bit that was Mozart's ; hair that was Manzoni's, Garibaldi's, Mary Somerville's, Florence Nightingale's ; and other hair relics the more. She will show you, too, a beautiful big crocodile's tooth, mounted in gold as a shawl pin, sent to her by Mr. and Mrs. Furness, her American cousins-in-Shakespeare ; a morsel of the Plymouth rock on which the Pilgrim Fathers landed, set in gold, sent to her by a gentleman of Puritan descent. Indeed, to Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's treasures there is no limit, be it portraits or photographs of friends kept sewn into bands of ribbon, in a most ingenious manner of her own invention, be it letters from eminent persons with whom she has had the privilege of corresponding. Everything is kept in the most tidy way, docketed, sorted. One case is reserved to her American correspondents, that number among them some of the greatest names in the States, another to her English friends, amid whom, too, are names "familiar to our mouths as household words."

But I have wandered from the American chair, which deserves a few more words accorded to it. A handsome object it is with its fine wood carvings, portions of which are cut from the wood of Shakespeare's famous mulberry tree in New Place, its copy in ivory of the monumental bust, its graceful tribute of inscription. The rich brocade with which it was originally covered has long been worn out, but its place is now taken by a covering in its way no less precious, for it was worked by the deft fingers of the singer Clara Novello, all the Novello sisters being expert in what Mrs. Cowden-Clarke has called,

"Dear needlework, that best of all resources for a woman's rest,  
When tired with too much headwork at a stretch."

From the Hall, we pass into a music-room, decorated in rich Italian style, with tinted stucco alto-relievi enclosing oil-colour views of the Riviera. Here stand two pianos in constant use for two, four or eight hand performances ; here in the winter may be heard the voices of Clara's daughters, who have inherited a moderate portion of their mother's gift ; while in a snug corner may be seen dear Mrs. Cowden-Clarke in her picturesque costume of pearl grey or black satin and close-fitting lace cap, listening intently, enrapt, to the sweet strains that recall yet sweeter memories. Mrs. Cowden-Clarke is ever a very ideal picture of what old age should and might be. Trim, dainty, full of smiles for the young, of sympathy for the struggling ; for though she lives in thought so much in the past, yet she lives also in the present, and her interest in all that is good, true, noble and

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lovely is ever awake. She is both a lesson and a picture ; a picture as pleasure to the eye, a lesson showing how, if we keep our hearts young, we not only retain our pleasure in life, but remain a pleasure, in lieu of a burden, to those around us.

Out of the music-room opens a small drawing-room, that contains many treasures of memory, among them a portrait of Mrs. Cowden-Clarke in the character of Dame Quickly, one of the various rôles she played when on that theatrical trip with Dickens of which mention is so frequently made in his letters, and whose memory she cherishes as among her brightest. Among many letters from the great novelist, she has one in which he has signed himself in hand-writings the most diverse, with the name of the various characters they played together. Indeed, Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's active love for artistic and theatrical joys is far from extinct. As recently as 1881, on a visit to England she played, in private theatricals, the part of Mrs. Malaprop, in Sheridan's "*Rivals*," with grace and vigour ; whilst the following year, at another performance, she recited, in the same character, a most entertaining prologue written by herself that is full of the choicest and happiest Malaprops. Want of space forbids me from quoting the same, either in part or at length.

Into the sanctuary of Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's bed-chamber it is, of course, permitted to few to penetrate. It is a sanctuary truly. Here, she decks with fresh flowers the portraits of her dear and dead departed—the adored husband, the loved parents. By her bedside hang the portraits of Keats, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens, Leigh Hunt, J. T. Fields, and others, loved and lost, nearer and dearer. Beside the chimney hangs a photograph of the American sculptor Gould's impressive bas-relief of Hamlet's father, a special favourite of Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's ; while, richest treasure perchance of all in a room full of treasures and mementoes of the past, is a small crayon portrait of Mrs. Siddons by Sir Thomas Lawrence, which, as far as I could learn, has never been reproduced, and which furnishes a graceful and spirited idea of that wonderful actress.

From Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's room we pass into the snug library, with its two comfortable writing-tables, covered with all the needed appliances of the scribe, its walls lined with the works of the best authors, with rare and choice editions, with presentation copies rendered richer by the autographs of the donors. Needless to remark that editions of Shakespeare abound ; while on the scant wall spaces unclothed with books hang portraits of the bard, views of Stratford, pictures of his house, a copy of John Bell's Tercentenary medal and other Shakespeariana the more. Here, too, hangs an interesting group of the Novello family, painted by the dead brother Edward. As is fitting, they are all grouped about the piano, on which the father is playing while sons and daughters join, as was their wont, in singing the refined compositions that were the father's



especial favourites, and the mother, placid and happy, looks on, justly proud of her numerous progeny.

From the library windows are seen peaceful vistas of the garden with its roses, olives and trellised vines, its creepers and annuals, while in the rear uprise the tall aspiring cypresses that bound the garden, wherein sleep their last sleep, "Greeks, Jews, and other Protestants," as Mr. Novello was quaintly told when buying his villa and the adjoining lands.

A glance at this garden: with its tiled sunny terrace commanding the blue bay—where the African hoppoe yearly alights about September 7th—with its fountains, its runnels of fresh water, enticing the nightingale to make her abode among its eucalyptus and palm trees; its gracious Italian sights and sounds, where the peaceful lapping of the Mediterranean is interrupted by the stirring martial strains of the Garibaldian hymn, played by the soldiers that guard the forts beneath the garden walls; where the sight of bright sunny flecks of sails upon the sea alternate with mossy nooks that might be English in their luxurious abundance of green: a glance at this garden fitly closes a visit to the Villa Novello.

The motto on the sundial, too, is appropriate to the inmates who have retired from the strife of life.

"Conto soltanto le ore serene."

Serene indeed are the hours in that house. Its inmates enjoy that calm height of repose, whose aim and nature have been defined so happily in Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's "Sonnets of Labour and Leisure," that leisure which does not mean cessation from work, but relief from the fret and hurry, the leisure that means—

"To have full time  
For thinking, acting, walking, resting, all  
Without the sense of pressure."

I fear I have\* given but a pale picture of the natural beauties of the Villa Novello, of the rare charm of its owners. I can but say for myself, that I never quitted its threshold, and retrod its rosy approach without having Spenser's lines ringing in my ears as peculiarly appropriate to those who here, loving and loved, spend the evening of their days:

"Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,  
Ease after warre, death after life doth greatly please."



## MICHAEL'S MISTAKE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ADONAI, Q.C.," "YVONNE," ETC.

## INTRODUCTORY.

A SHOP in one of the busiest thoroughfares of London ; an old, time-honoured shop.

Look at its muddy windows—one, two, three ; glance up at the weather-beaten sign. Then bring your eyes down to the windows again ; this time not to look at them, but through them. What do you see ? Bags, whips, dressing-cases, bridles and snaffles—is it not so ? Over here the wooden effigy of a horse, harness complete ; over there again straps and cleaning cloths by the score. Now bend your head low down ; and hard by, a little to the right, what do you see ? Lying side by side there—*three great, sturdy portmanteaus*.

Come away from the window, and stand beside the door, in this niche where no one will notice you. Stand here, as if in a dream, letting all the whirling hansoms, the rickety four-wheelers, the rambling drays, the pitter patter of all the busy and the idle feet go by. Just stand here, and watch.

You have a vision of an old, tall, stooping man in clerical dress, grey-haired, and with a proud, meek face—if one may use such an apparent contradiction. You see the girl on his right, dark and brilliant, and upright as an arrow, having his face with all its pride and none of its meekness ; and on his left you see a pale, golden-haired, sweet-featured maiden.

Let them pass and open the door. Squeeze in after them—and listen.

The old man speaks ; you notice that his voice is clear and bell-like.

"I want a portmanteau," he says ; "something small, and portable, and ——"

"Oh, grandpapa —— !"

He looks from one girl to the other.

"Is that not it ?"

"No, no ! A large, strong, useful portmanteau."

"And an uncommon ; different from anyone else's, if possible," the fair girl adds softly.

The shopman makes a dive into the window, and brings out one of the three portmanteaus that you were looking at.

"This here ought to suit," he says. "Look at the brass bands on the ends, and look at the lock—which is a patent. You might travel all over the world with this, and never meet with the like of it."

Well, it ends in the buying of the portmanteau, and the disappearance of the old man and his granddaughters out into the surging

streets again. Stand at the door; follow them with your eyes until you can follow them no longer; then turn your head on this side; and what do you see?

A hansom stopping at this door. Who comes out of it?

This time you have a vision of a slight, dainty little gentleman, his thin sunburnt face adorned by a trimly-kept, carefully-waxed, long brown imperial. Follow him also into the shop, and listen.

"I want to see a portmanteau, if you please," and you notice the foreign ring in his voice. "Something that can stand wear and tear, and plenty of knocking about. Have you such?"

The shopman makes a dive once again into the window, and brings out the second of those that you were looking at. He lays it, with a satisfied thump, down upon the counter.

"I could guarantee this wearing all over the world, sir. What with the brass bands on the ends, and that lock—a new patent—I believe it would wear for ever. You might travel a lifetime with it, and never once come across its equal."

Well, this also ends in the buying of the portmanteau, and the disappearance of the little, middle-aged, jaunty foreigner. Watch while he springs into the attendant hansom, watch the hansom itself whirling off with the tide of its fellows; then turn your head once again, for the last time, and what do you see?

Once more you have a vision of deep, grave eyes; of a broad brow and scholarly face; of a thin, lithe, tall form. Enter when he opens the door, and listen.

His quick glance goes straight to the window.

"Show me that portmanteau, will you?"

The shopman dives for it, the last of those that you were looking at.

"I can recommend this, sir. You might travel till doomsday with it, and never once see another like it. The brass at the ends, and the lock—a patent—and ——"

"It will do; I will take it."

Come away — out of the shop into the open air again; watch him out of sight, walking, walking along there in the winter sunset. Then put it all from your mind, shop, and street, and visions, and listen to me.

I see the first portmanteau. I see it with piles of others in the long whispering loft of an old French château; I see it journeying, journeying; and now again I see it, lying as if asleep, the warm bright sun dancing upon it, the great smiling Rhine eddying along within earshot. Once again journeying, I see its arrival in an old shadowy, Continental city; I travel—travel with it; I see it at Calais; I see it at Dover. I look at the calendar of my thoughts, and there I find the date of its arrival—*August 15, in the year of our Lord 1881.*

I see the second portmanteau. I see it under the hot burning sun

of Africa ; I see it again with the icy Alpine winds whirling about it. I see it in China. I see it in America. I see it in the hold of a mighty steamer, pitching and tossing, the waves thundering, the chains rattling. Then again the blue rippling waters of the Mediterranean flop against the planks which separate it from them. I see it in a dim old Continental city ; I travel—travel with it ; I hear the swish of the Channel waves ; I see the white cliffs of Dover. I look at the date—*August 15, 1881.*

I see the third portmanteau. I see it with the strong, Scotch heather-smelling wind blowing in through an open turret window on to it. I see it amidst the din of a troop-ship. I see it in India—now on the hills, now on the plains. I see it again journeying—journeying ; I see it on the Continent, touching here, tarrying there. I feel the shock of the waves beating against a vessel ; I see the confusion of a landing-stage : I find that this is Dover ;—and I look at the date :—*August 15, 1881.*

That is all. That is the history, so far, of these three portman-teaus ; these three that you were peering at through the muddy window of that shop in the busy London thoroughfare.

## I.

ON with a whirr and a rush ; on, on, on. Forest, and hill, and dale ; turreted castle and cotter's hovel ; breezy whin-covered slopes—with the birds twittering overhead, and the wind blowing, blowing. Rippling, dancing, glistening rivers ; grey, time-tried, old bridges, sunny villages, flaming forges, teeming cities. The long, lithe, serpent-like train flies on.

All through the beautiful day its windows flash in the sunshine ; and the white smoke rushes out with an echoing puff ; away out, spreading over the faces of the quiet field-workers, and speaking to the dreamy ones of a thousand marvellous things.

Clank, clank, clatterty clank—until the shadows lengthen, and the mist sweeps down over the hills, into the fir trees standing gloomy and stern below. The white smoke of the engine becomes gradually more indistinct, and its lights stand out redder and warmer and brighter, until at last they are glowing, glowing. The stoker heaps the coal on, and laughs merrily with his comrade as the wind whistles by ; the people in the carriages yawn, and pull their cloaks about them. Some of them smoke, some of them read, some of them sleep. There are joyful hearts among them, and there is sorrow too, and pain—despair even. Oh, what a strange little world is the train !

Thus it flies on. As the darkness thickens the men on the engine increase vigilance, stretching their heads out, now to this side, now to that. Other trains meet them, passing with a noise that reminds one of nothing so much as a storm scene in a diorama. Gradually the houses thicken, chimneys rise up about them ; walls ever growing

higher, run alongside them. They rattle over a bridge; they sweep round a corner—and away in the distance a myriad of lights are gleaming; a city—a great city.

Down goes the window of a first class compartment with a bang; and a man's dark head bobs out, and bobs back again. He fastens his wraps hastily together, he changes his travelling cap for a hat; he pulls his coat up at the neck and smooths himself down. There he stands, a dainty, kindly-eyed, jaunty little gentleman, his sunburnt face adorned by a trim and carefully waxed imperial.

The engines slacken, the lines multiply. The train chooses its way amongst them with an echoing thud; another moment and it steams out of the darkness, solemn, snake-like, and mysterious, into the seething, glittering station.

A roar of life. The little man's door swings open and he descends cautiously, throwing a searching glance around him. Through the gleam of the porters' lights, through the people hurrying to and from amidst the rushing trucks, there comes the flash of a long brown coat and ruddy chestnut hair. A wild salute, and he starts forward, his eyes beaming.

"Michael!"

"Uncle Fabian! How are you?—how are you? I am so glad, so very glad to see you."

He goes on shaking the hand in his as if he never meant to loose it.

"Michael! so here you are! And what was the journey from Hobart Town like? rather rough, eh? Ah! Michael; who was right—you or I?"

Brown eyes smile into the grey ones.

"Not I, Uncle—and not you. I said it would be fine; you said I should never reach home at all."

"Ah, you rogue, Michael! I tell you, you should never have left me; and since you did, what have you been about? They say in Florence ——"

"Bless me, Uncle Fabian, were you there?"

"And they tell me in Paris, that ——"

"Now, Uncle Fabian!"

"And as to that Monte Carlo affair: why Michael ——"

"Oh as to that, Uncle ——"

"And you lost your luggage, Michael?"

The young man stopped him with a burst of laughter. "So will you lose yours; I declare you will, unless someone looks after it. Uncle Fabian, go on out to the carriage; I will see to the luggage for you."

"Very well, Michael; brass bands at the ends; patent lock; you remember?"

"As if I could forget, Uncle!"

Michael turned and pushed his way towards the vans at the end of

the train, where a motley group were jostling and peering together. His eyes laughed in the lamp-light as he watched them; looking handsome, and upright, and brave, as he always did. Brave—that was the secret of it. There was a certain fearless, natural grace about this Michael St. Martin, that found out the soft place in most people's hearts—and went straight there, like a ray of winter sunshine, or a kind word aptly spoken. For whether is the heart reached easier, by the eyes or by the ears—who can tell?

Brave—that was the secret of it. He was one of the few, the very few, able to carry shoulders back and head erect, and to walk so, without the suspicion of stiffness or a swagger; and to smile the world straight in the face without thought of bravado. If you had seen him as he stood there, his bright eyes and hair, and warm-coloured ulster, marking him out a patch of light against the sombre colouring around him, he might have left a vague impression on your mind of a man whom no obstacle, no trouble, however great, would entirely crush; as if he would battle with anything, keeping his face always to the wind. Or he might have made you think, somehow or other, of a graceful and taut little clipper, now in the trough of the waves, now on their crests; but always gallant, always daring. Brave-looking; that was the secret of Michael St. Martin's charm.

As he pushed his way in, one of the station officials touched him on the shoulder.

"Mr. St. Martin, can I get anything out for you, sir? the bell is just going to ring."

"Oh, Giles, would you? a big portmanteau with brass on the ends, and a projecting lock; you can't mistake it."

The man hesitated. "Only one, Mr. Michael?"

"Only one, I think, Giles. Why?"

"Because I noticed three in the van like that just a minute ago. They were lying one above the other; I couldn't help looking at them."

Michael St. Martin opened his eyes.

"Three! Nonsense; he never had more than one. Are you sure?"

"Quite sure, sir; exactly alike; and together."

"And no address on any of them?"

"No. I think not."

"Bless me, three! Yes, I see them, I see them; they must all be his, of course. Get them out, will you, and send them after me."

He turned once again, and walked rapidly between the rows of trains into the open station, wondering the while where and when Uncle Fabian had picked up these brethren for his odd portmanteau. "He must have got them made to order," he laughed to himself.

The bell began to clang, the engine whistled shrilly, sending its steam with a fizz and a wheeze about the feet of the people on the platform; Michael drew back a little, half stopping in his course to see the long train go. His eyes glanced carelessly at the first



carriage, indifferently at the second, mechanically at the third; at the fourth curiously and with a smile, for there a girl's small golden head leaned far out of the window. At the fifth—what did he do? He started as though a bomb-shell had exploded beside him, stood stock still, made a frantic rush of a few steps and finally came to a dead stand again. There he waved his hat, and his stick, with the despairing ferocity of a man to whom no alternative mode of greeting is open. When it was fairly gone, he made his way hastily out into the darkness, to where the brougham, with its steaming horses, stood waiting for him. He opened the door and threw himself back among the soft cushions.

"Uncle Fabian!"

The little man, eyebrows raised, eyes lowered, bent forward in the act of setting light to a cigar.

"Well, Michael; have you missed my luggage?"

"No, no; they are bringing it out now. Uncle Fabian, do you know Christian Fane?"

The dull red light glowed. Fabian Lestrève raised himself thoughtfully.

The young man laid his strong brown hand on the little gentleman's daintily gloved one. "Listen, Uncle Fabian. Christian Fane and I have been chums since our school days. I'm sure you must remember how often I got letters from him, when you and I were away together, Uncle Fabian? At any rate, I did get them—Indian letters—ever so often. Well, he wrote to me two months ago from Moulton; and not a word about coming home or anything unusual. Uncle Fabian, your train passed me just this minute on its way out of the station; I raised my eyes and there at one of the windows, was—Christian Fane."

Uncle Fabian made a movement of incredulity. "You must be mistaken, Michael," said he, as he puffed away at his cigar.

"I tell you, Uncle, it was Christian Fane. Think of my being ten minutes in there with him and not to know it. Think of his coming home in this way without sending word to anybody."

Fabian Lestrève brought his cigar out of his mouth with a flourish. "It was droll, Michael. Perhaps he was dull—eh?—and just ran away from his dullness; that's what I do. I wonder *you* don't, too, my Michael; I wonder you don't die of ennui here at Hillsborough. If you *will* stay here, why don't you marry?"

The young man laughed drily.

"Because some fine day I might take it into my head, *not* to stay here."

"Well; and if you did, you would be married, and ——"

"And dull no longer. I should have the remedy without the cause. Don't speak of marriage to me, Uncle Fabian."

The little thin bronzed face studied him calmly. "Oh, my Michael! After that ——"

The young man threw back his head, laughing. "After that—shall I tell you my adventures?"

He nodded, adjusting his cigar again, and settling himself comfortably back on the soft cushions. The dimly-lighted streets gave place to broader and brighter ones; the red and green lights of the jingling trams flashed in on them; the heavy-laden omnibuses, thundered past them; but Michael talked and laughed on, raising his cheery voice so as to be heard through the din, and Fabian Les-trève listened to his nephew smilingly, and with half-closed, contented eyes. For if ever one human being idolised another, little Fabian idolised this nephew of his.

He was an easy-going, kind-hearted, even-tempered little gentleman; and, more valuable, perhaps, than all these qualities put together, he had a will of his own. When Michael had taken his degree at Oxford, and was preparing to shoot and fish, and—speaking figuratively—dream his life away as a country gentleman, it was then that jaunty Fabian stepped in, showing his will. He came from wandering to and fro over the face of the earth, to Hillsborough; and when he left it, he took his nephew with him. He had argued, and expostulated, and cajoled, and finally carried his point. Michael must travel.

And Michael did travel. For three long years he went, nothing loath, exactly where the wind and Uncle Fabian listed. At the end of these three years they were at Hobart Town, and Heaven knows what possessed Michael, but he suddenly took it into his head to insist upon starting there and then for Hillsborough. Uncle Fabian argued; so did Michael. They had a nearer approach to a quarrel just then than either of them had before deemed possible. The end of it was, Michael went off, and Uncle Fabian stayed on at Hobart Town, nearly broken hearted. Two days afterwards Michael re-appeared, overcome with remorse for what he called his abominable selfishness, and declaring his intention of carrying out the remainder of the tour, if Uncle Fabian still wished it.

Uncle Fabian did not still wish it; he had formed other plans in the meantime: but perhaps, after all, they were only feigned ones to prevent what he called his Michael's unselfishness. Be that as it may, uncle and nephew said good-bye again—a laughing good-bye this time—upon the quay at Hobart Town. Michael came home *via* the civilised parts of the East, and the Continent, taking about four months to his journey in all. Uncle Fabian after nearly losing his life a dozen times in various difficult and inaccessible regions of the globe, came home too. He arrived there upon the evening of the 15th August, 1881, just eight months after his nephew Michael.

They had rolled on, past the quiet twinkling cottages and solitary passers-by of the turnpikes; they had threaded their way amongst sweetly-smelling country lanes, they had swept down a long, dark avenue, and come out of the carriage at an ivy-covered portico, bril-

liant with light ; going on together up the staircase of an old, rambling house. There Fabian Lestrève falls into a reverie before his bed-room fire ; the flames flickering brightly up towards him, so that one can see the thin sprinkling of grey through hair and moustache, and even trace the adventurous course of a wrinkle here and there.

Michael is in his room ; half-smiling to himself as he goes over in thought again a hundred and one of Uncle Fabian's vagaries. Suddenly hurried footsteps cross the room overhead, and a voice he knows well calls his name hastily.

"Michael !"

He goes up the stairs at a bound, and pushes the door open.

"Yes, Uncle Fabian ?"

"Michael !" He says no more ; he stands as a man in a dream ; just the one word, and waves his hand to the floor. The quick brown eyes of his nephew follow the hand with a glance. Lying side by side there in the firelight, are three great, sturdy portmanteaus.

For one instant Michael St. Martin stands aghast ; then he falls back on the bed, and bursts into a fit of laughter, stirring up echoes in the old gallery. Fabian Lestrève finds his voice then.

"Michael ! are you mad ? In all the world what—what does this mean ?"

"Oh, Uncle Fabian—you don't—you don't mean to say they're not yours ?"

The little man's grey eyes fairly stand out of his head.

"Mine ! mine, Michael ! I declare I don't know what you mean. I'm sure I don't know what *they* mean. Look at the brass bands ; look at the locks. Which is mine ? There's the question. Perhaps you can tell me where you got *these* from, Michael St. Martin."

"Got what—got which, Uncle Fabian ?"

Fabian drew in his breath, eyeing his nephew narrowly. "Now, look here, Michael. I put one portmanteau into the van."

"And I brought out three—yes ?"

Fabian Lestrève sat down abruptly.

"Michael ! is this a trick—or a miracle—or what ?"

"Oh, Uncle Fabian," he bent his head on the mantelpiece : "Just give me time to breathe, will you ? I am so awfully sorry ! It's all my mistake," said Michael.

Meantime the train flies on. The train flies quickly, almost as quickly as thought ; only that thought hurries hither and thither, to and fro at will, and the train pants its course nervously along one hard iron beaten track—there is no other path open to it.

So uncle Fabian's train whirled on. It had passed through many villages, and had stopped at other cities ; it had gone between high rocks, and dashed fearlessly, with its human freight, in the darkness, over wild yawning precipices ; it had skirted tempestuous sweeping rivers ; and once the white spray of the ocean itself, had sprinkled

the dry windows of the carriages. Clank, clank, clatterly-clank ; a wild lonely lake stretching out beside it, a vast expanse of undulating plain lying before it. At the end of the plain, a little quivering cluster of lights.

The window of a first-class compartment goes down slowly, and the wind blows fiercely against a girl's small head ; the darkness is unfathomable ; nothing of the lake to be seen, nothing of the plain ; only the twinkling distant lights. She keeps her head out for a minute, nostrils dilated, eyes glittering ; then she turns suddenly back again.

"Constella!"

A figure stretched out upon one of the seats, starts up with a bound.

"Viola!—What—why—where are we?"

Viola laughed. "Almost at home ; come and look out at the lights. What a time you have been asleep, Constella ! Ever since we left Hillsborough. I suppose the boat last night tired you ?"

Constella nodded. "Yes, it was the boat. Also that scene—do you remember—just as we were leaving Hillsborough ! The fair man on the platform, and the dark man in our train. That set me off ; first day-dreaming, and then dreaming in reality. Oh, how grand ! how beautiful ! How is it, Viola, that the night and the darkness always raise one's spirits so ?"

"Not the darkness, Constella ; the bright prospect in the midst of the darkness."

"No, no, no ! If we were in the most desolate place on earth it would be just the same, so long as one could breathe up the mysterious night-wind."

Viola Guyne turned away from the window with a sigh.

"You always were a strange child, Constella, and these three years abroad have made you stranger. I can assure you our rough English wind will soon blow all your dreaminess away. Oh, the dear little town ! Here come the lights of the square, and the steeple clock. Oh, Constella, half past two ; I can read the time. Think of arriving at this hour in the night ! will grandpapa come to meet us ?"

"Viola ! with his rheumatism ! no ; but Betsy will."

Viola laughed. "So she will. Now, Constella, we must make haste to get our luggage. Have you all your wraps ready ?"

"Yes. Viola, look !—do you see her—Betsy ?"

"Yes, and with the same old bonnet ! Constella, it makes one almost ashamed."

They both laughed, and opening the carriage-door, jumped tumultuously into the tearful embrace of a kindly-faced woman on the platform.

"Betsy ! you dear old creature, how are you ? You shouldn't have come out so late. Is grandpapa well ?"

"Quite well, quite well, Miss Viola, dear—except for his rheum-

atism." She kissed them again and again, wiping her eyes on her shawl. "What he will feel to see you looking so bright and beautiful! And Miss Constella just as lovely as——"

They stopped her, laughing. "Oh, Betsy, don't! Do you want to ruin us at once?"

The old woman laughed too, tears running down her cheeks the while.

"I must get your luggage, first, at all events, my dears. What have you? Just the one portmanteau?"

"Yes, do you remember it? Brass bands at the ends; and the strange lock. See, they are opening the van; come quickly."

They hastened down the station, the quiet lamps shining upon them. A few drowsy passengers bent out from the windows of the train. The luggage van stood open, white deal packing-boxes and deserted looking hampers littered the platform around it. One passenger, a tall man, in a long grey ulster, was peering into the van as they came up; a porter was rummaging about inside. Viola bent forward.

"Oh, please would you give us out our portmanteau? A big one, with brass at the ends and a projecting lock."

The tall passenger turned round swiftly, the most intense surprise written on every feature. Viola Guyne caught a vision of a scholarly face and grave astonished eyes. Then she spoke again to the porter.

"Is it there?"

He swung himself out on to the platform, touching his hat.

"No, miss, it is not; nor in the other van either. I have been looking for one just like that for this gentleman. There's nothing of the kind in the train."

Constella came a step forward. "I think it must be there," she said quietly. "We saw it put in, and I am sure there is no other like ours. The brass runs up and down the ends in bands; and the lock stands out more than an inch from the portmanteau."

"But that is exactly the description of mine!"

Viola and Constella Guyne stared; two dark grave eyes studied them in return, after a moment smiling at their bewilderment. The old servant interfered sharply:

"The young ladies' portmanteau must be there, do you hear, porter? Just go in again and look, will you."

Viola gathered up her courage and addressed the stranger.

"I don't understand. Have you really a portmanteau like that? And—and have you lost yours too?"

He lifted his hat quietly and answered her.

"Yes; it is a very strange coincidence. I never saw another portmanteau like mine; and I have knocked about a good deal lately. They are both gone, I am afraid."

"It is dreadful. Constella, Betsy, what shall we do?"

"Goodness knows, Miss Viola; it is very unlucky; and at such an hour too!"

The dark passenger interfered again.

"Pardon me; where was your portmanteau put into the van?"

Viola raised her blue eyes frankly.

"In London. We came up from Dover."

"From Dover!"

"Yes, and changed trains in London, and came straight on."

His heavily moustached lip curled into a smile. "Matters are complicating. I came up from Dover to London, and changed trains, and came straight on."

The two girls stared at each other, the old woman stepped forward, and peered again into the van. Constella's golden head gleamed in the lamp light.

"Don't you think we had better do something about them?" she said hastily. "The train must just be starting now."

He bent to her gravely. "What would you suggest?"

"I—I don't know."

"Neither do I, very well. Look here, guard," and he turned sharply to a man hurrying past them. "I suppose you didn't see anything of two big portmanteaus, did you, at any of the stations? Brass bands at the ends, and projecting locks."

The man paused a moment, passing his hand over his hot forehead.

"I seem to remember something about them, sir; odd-looking things, were they? Yes, yes, of course," he went on, his face brightening; "it was at Hillsborough I joined the train, and it was there I saw them coming out of the van. Three; there were three just alike."

"At Hillsborough!"

"Three!"

The man with the grey ulster and Viola made the two exclamations together, and paused, looking at each other. The guard turned to Viola.

"Yes, miss, three, one beside the other. I must go now, but just you tell the station-master about them. Right—all right!"

In two minutes the girls, with their servant, were walking hastily down the draughty station. Somehow or other, this tall, unknown passenger kept beside them, without listening to, or taking part in their conversation. Near the door he came a step nearer and said:

"I have been thinking, I have a friend at Hillsborough, and I intend telegraphing to him to find out my portmanteau and send it on here. He can easily do the same for yours, if you have no objection."

Viola faced him a little doubtfully.

"It is very good of you, but ——"

"But perhaps you would rather not?"

"Oh no, indeed; but you see the whole thing is so strange, the guard said he saw three portmanteaus."



He laughed. "It is strange; but I have no doubt my friend will be able to unravel the mystery, if you do not mind."

"It is very good of you. How shall we know, then?" She paused a moment; then added, her colour deepening slightly: "Our name is Guyne, and we live at the Rectory. Perhaps you could let us have word there?"

He bowed gravely. "Thank you. I will let you know as soon as I hear. I—I am—perhaps I had better give you my card, Miss Guyne. I am putting up at the hotel here, for a few days' fishing, and of course ——"

He stopped abruptly, a smile breaking over his face as his eyes glanced from one girl to the other, and again to the old woman standing half-bewildered between them. "Of course if you should hear anything about yours ——"

"We will let you know at once; certainly, Mr.——Mr.——" Viola paused; the most polite people will do impolite things sometimes. Viola Guyne never could account afterwards for her own ill-breeding, but somehow she paused, and raised his card involuntarily to her eyes.

He smiled. "Yes, you will find it there. Good night, then. I hope I shall soon have welcome news for you." And lifting his hat once more, he turned slowly away, leaving Viola hot and indignant, with the cool night wind blowing in on her.

"How could I!" she exclaimed angrily. "Betsy, Constella, tell me how I could."

Constella's large eyes followed the grey ulster. "I don't know I'm sure, dear. Viola, did you recognize him? and I believe that his Hillsborough friend was the fair man on the platform. What does he call himself? Show me his card."

"Here it is. Oh, Constella!"

The girl stood for a moment, bending her small fair head, and straining her soft brown eyes—like a fawn's—under the last flickering lamp of the dingy station.

"Captain Fane," she read aloud, and added, so low that it was almost only a thought; "And I wonder what *the other* one's name is?"

(To be concluded.)



## BY THE VULTURE'S NEST.

BY BETTINA WIRTH, AUTHOR OF "PRINCESS ELEANOR."



HEAD OF CHAMOIS.

OF the many friends it has been my happy lot to win in the course of a long life, there is none dearer to my heart than Douglas Graham—an English gentleman.

Douglas Graham is a bachelor, and wealthy enough to roam about the world; never tired of encountering adventures and dangers of all kinds, yet ever eager to learn and to observe. Some time ago he confessed to me that a great wish of his heart was on the eve of fulfilment—he was about to shoot his first chamois.

I had often heard him say—"If I could but once shoot a chamois I should be happy;" and so I heartily congratulated him when he at

length showed me an invitation from Count P—— to his castle in the Tyrolean Alps, where a number of other well known sportsmen had already met for their favourite pastime.

There were no ladies at the castle, which was one used principally during the hunting season. The company included the "Jagdherr"—that is, the host—several Austrian noblemen, and also a young Frenchman, one of the military attachés of the French Embassy at Vienna.

As the gentlemen sat smoking round the enormous fireplace in the castle hall, conversation naturally turned upon the approaching chase; and the several places where the hunters were to be posted, in order to lie in wait for the game, were eagerly discussed. The young Frenchman, slightly heated, perhaps, by the champagne he had indulged in at table, exclaimed loudly: "If you have any *dangerous* position, which no one else cares to take, that will be the place for me."

The host rose, placed himself before the fire, and said quietly but courteously: "I am afraid I shall not be able to comply with your wish, Chevalier. Mr. Graham, who has honoured me with his presence, is not only one of my oldest friends, but he has been away from us for many years. I had, therefore, already determined to reserve for him our most difficult post; otherwise you may be sure that I should have great pleasure in meeting your wishes."

"All that I can say then, is, that I envy Mr. Graham," was the Frenchman's somewhat sullen rejoinder, whilst Graham drew nearer to the master of the house, and inquired what kind of place was so kindly reserved for him.

"We are never very certain, once the drive begins, what direction the wild creatures may take," replied Count P—. "Yet there is one certain narrow passage in the rocks, about three hours from the castle, which the chamois can scarcely help passing in their flight. But the only place where the hunter can conceal himself is a narrow ledge, with just room enough for a man to sit upon comfortably. But for anyone liable to the slightest giddiness, or even to over-excitement at the moment of shooting, it might become a position of positive danger. One cannot get to it otherwise than by being let down by ropes held by a couple of men on the rock above; but that is nothing, since of course we take good care that the tackle be secure. That is the only spot, Graham, on all my grounds, from which I think I can say that you are perfectly certain to kill a chamois. It is a hazardous post, as you see, but it is at your service."

When the gentlemen bade each other good-night on the grand old staircase of the castle, the host told them that they would unhappily have to moderate their ardour for some short time longer, since the next day being Sunday, the Chamois drive could not take place till the following morning.

The fields were still sparkling in the early dew when Douglas Graham left the castle the next day, and strolled down the hill to the riverside, where a pretty village was clustering round a handsome church with an old square tower. It was Sunday, and people were indoors preparing themselves for an early mass. Graham had long ago learnt to speak German, and loved to make friends with the poor and the humble. He sauntered about the village street, and directed his steps towards the church. As soon as the bells began to ring, the doors of several houses opened, and men and women marched out slowly and ceremoniously, as though they considered it indecorous to approach the church with a hurried step.

The congregation was not a very numerous one, and the bells soon ceased. Graham looked around, and was struck with the grandeur of the mountains, some of which were lying in deep violet shade, whilst others already glowed in the golden sunshine of a splendid summer's morning. He was leaning against the churchyard wall, so rapt in admiration of the scene before him, that he did not observe that a female figure had appeared under the doorway of a neighbouring house, and had remained there motionless for some time. Presently he lowered his eyes from the imposing mountains, and met another pair, blue as his own, but laughing with the merriment of early youth.

Graham saw at a glance that she was not dressed in her Sunday best, so he asked her: "Why do you stay away from church this morning? No sick relation to nurse, I trust?"

"Oh, no!" laughed the girl. "This is church-time for the old ones. We girls go up at ten o'clock, when the mothers must stay at home to cook the dinners." She was tall and slender, with hair and skin

so fair, she might have been a lady born. After a little more conversation, she added: "Is the gentleman staying with the Herr Graf?"

"Yes," replied Graham, "and I am going to the chamois hunt to-morrow. Will you not wish me good luck?"

"Well, yes; but not with much heart. I have more sympathy with the poor little ill-used animals, than with those who pursue them. But good-day to you, sir. I must now get back to my work." And with that, she disappeared within the house.

Graham strolled on through the churchyard, softly humming a favourite air. As he slowly recrossed the village the view again opened out, and this time the castle, whose hospitable roof had sheltered him during the preceding night, appeared before him.

It stood upon a slight eminence, entirely surrounded by forests of a deep green, and was built in a fanciful style, rendered beautiful by age. In the park surrounding the castle on all sides, Graham met some of the gentlemen who were to be his fellow sportsmen, and with whom he returned to the house. After a great deal of pleasant conversation, the Count advised Graham to pay a visit to the spot where he was to shoot his chamois on the morrow, which was celebrated for its beautiful view into a dozen different valleys. Graham was delighted with the idea, and submitted with a good grace when the Chevalier offered to go with him.

It was early in the afternoon when they set out. Their guide, a young forester, led the way to a narrow path between two bright meadows, enclosed on either side by the forest's dark pine trees, and beyond them a group of successive hills, with narrow valleys between them. Graham was glad of a companion to whom he could speak about all that pleased his eye, but he found little sympathy in Monsieur le Chevalier. Frenchmen, as a rule, are no great admirers of scenery, and this young man had a firm notion that this was the time for setting up a reputation. Whatever they began to talk about he invariably found means to terminate by an allusion to some of his own exploits.

Suddenly he broke off in the middle of a sentence, and gave a low whistle of delight. Graham followed the direction of the Frenchman's eyes, but seemed—not equally pleased.

Not a hundred paces in front of them, on a wonderfully smooth sward, stood a small house, and in the dark doorway a slight female figure in bright garments—Graham's acquaintance of the morning. She was shading her eyes with her hand, and already welcoming them with the loud melodious "Jodl," common among the mountain peasantry of Tyrol, which their guide, the young forester, as cheerfully returned. Then she advanced a little to meet them, and greeted them cordially.

The girl made them at home in a very few minutes, and, seating herself on the bench at Graham's side, chatted for some time in an

easy, unembarrassed, well-bred manner, which charmed the young Englishman more every moment.

At last the Chevalier rose, and proposed that they should leave the beautiful spot, which was only half-way to the place they had intended to visit. Graham, however, preferred staying where he was for the present, and the Frenchman, after a few polite phrases to the pretty girl, went away with the guide.

As soon as they had departed, Graham explained to his companion that he had come out so far only to look at a place which was to be one of the posts in the Count's chamois hunt of the next day. The girl leaned forward, and asked in an anxious tone of voice: "What spot do you mean? Not where the Vulture's Nest was taken down last year?"

"It may be for aught I know," answered Graham. "I have not seen it, but will describe it to you, as others have described it to me."

The girl was watching him anxiously, and when he stopped for a moment in his recital, murmured softly: "This is my dream coming true! And who is going to be placed there?" she continued, with a terrified look.

"Myself," was Graham's answer.

The girl rose from her seat, looked at him imploringly, and said: "I will beg you on my knees not to go to the post by the Vulture's Nest, and you must not refuse my request. Listen. A year ago I was staying in this little chalet quite alone, as I am now. I was waiting for Jockl to come and fetch the butter for the castle, and I would not go to bed before he had been here. But I was very drowsy, and fell asleep on the bench near the window with my head on the sill, and the early moon streaming in upon me. I dreamt a horrible dream that night. I saw a hunter come to the spot where the Vulture's Nest had been. I saw him climb down to the ledge—he required no ropes to get to it. I saw him sit motionless for a long time. Then I heard a strange noise in the distance. The hunter jumped to his feet, leaned forward to shoot, and just as the peal of his rifle was heard, he lost his balance, and fell into the precipice below. I woke with a start, and found Jockl's hand upon my shoulder."

The girl paused a moment, and Graham waited in silence.

"He laughed at me when I told him my dream," she continued.

"But he no longer laughed a few days afterwards, when a neighbour's son, a fine young fellow, who had always wanted to shoot a chamois on his own account, was found dead at the bottom of the high rock, where the streams join and pass out into the valley. You must not allude to his fate at the castle, for they all believe he fell while he was cutting down a tree in his father's forest. They do not know it, but I saw him go past here at dawn, warned him, and told him of my dream. He only laughed at me, and said I was paid by the Count to spread dangerous stories, in order to spoil the boys' pleasure in hunting a chamois on the sly."



Graham laughed at the girl's earnestness. "I am glad you told me all this," he said, "but I shall take better care of myself, you may be sure. The spot is not dangerous in itself; it was only that poor youth's imprudence that made it so. Besides, your dream has already come to pass—so now, all danger is over."

"No, no," vehemently cried the girl—"I have not told you all. Last night I was visited by the same dream again, and the hunter who disappeared in the precipice was not a peasant this time. Now that I see you, I could almost imagine it was yourself."

At this moment a mountain cry was heard in the distance, and shortly after the guide reappeared, emerging from the forest, but without M. le Chevalier. He explained that the Frenchman had declared he would return home by another road, and had sent him back to the ch  let, in case Douglas Graham should wish to visit the spot of his intended exploits on the morrow.

Before Graham could answer the guide's question another man appeared upon the scene, and was warmly welcomed by the girl—Jockl, of whom she had twice spoken to Graham. She took his arm, and drew him aside, and whispered a few words to him, to which he replied by as many nods. He was a fine young fellow, a head taller than the girl who was clinging to him, and Graham could not look at him without a momentary pang, as of jealousy—foolish as he knew the feeling to be.

The sun was slowly setting, as Graham, with his two companions, commenced their homeward walk. For a while they walked on in silence, and Graham enjoyed the perfume of the delicious air on those heights, and watched the varying light on the mountain-chains that rose all around between the valley and the bright evening sky. Suddenly Jockl cleared his throat, and said, "Louise, I suppose, has been telling you a good deal about dreams and superstitions, and such things. She was very wrong to do so, but she was right in advising you not to accept the post by the Vulture's Nest."

Graham looked at the young peasant with a cold glance. Jockl understood the glance, and said:

"I know exactly how much you can do. I can see that at once, when I look at your legs and arms, and mark your resolute eye. But have you ever hunted the chamois before?"

"No, never."

"Does the Count know that?"

"I am not sure that he does."

"Depend upon it, then, he does not," said Jockl, "for he would never send you to the Vulture's Nest if he did. But once the game appears, if you have never seen a chamois before, your very senses will leave you. Twenty chances to one you will make a step forward, and, if so, inevitably fall into the precipice. When you have shot a dozen chamois you may go to the place and try it; but not till then."

Graham was struck by the man's words; they were spoken so sensibly, and so quietly. They sounded like a law by which a man must abide, if he be not a madman.

After a while, Jockl added: "I have been to that place six or seven times myself, and have each time shot a chamois there. But since Louise has had that dream, she won't let me go there again. She is such a good sister—I cannot help letting her have her way."

"She is your sister!" Graham exclaimed. "What a very nice girl she is. Well, I am grateful to you both for the interest you take in my behalf, and I now promise to speak to the Count about it."

Graham scarcely had time to change his dress at the castle, before the dinner bell sounded. The company sat down to table without the Frenchman, who had not yet returned. Graham informed his host that he had not seen the place he had gone out to look at, and thought he could not do better than repeat the whole of his conversation with Jockl. But he never mentioned the young man's sister. The Count laughed and said:

"You have spent your afternoon with the most dangerous poacher of all our neighbourhood—a brave young fellow, however, whom I only wish I could get as a ranger. But he prefers his liberty to all other advantages. I believe he considers a chamois to be no longer a chamois, if he is authorised to shoot it."

After a pause the Count added:

"But why did you not tell us before that this is to be your first chamois hunt? Jockl is perfectly right, and the Chevalier has now a chance. But where is he?"

"The Chevalier left me long ago," returned Graham, "and after a time sent back our guide to me, saying he would return alone. I hope he has not lost his way."

"It is a moonlight night," observed one of the other guests, "and from all the hills around, the castle is plainly visible. Only what to a stranger seems the easiest and best road to take is sometimes very difficult to get over."

The host looked at his watch, and, while the company were assembled and smoking in the large hall, Graham withdrew. He then took his hat and strolled leisurely out into the garden, as if he intended spending only a few minutes in the open air. But as soon as he had reached the dark shadow of the pine trees, he hastened his step, and took the same direction as in the afternoon, when the Frenchman had been his companion. A vague feeling of uneasiness, almost of suspicion, had taken possession of him, and gave him no rest. The high summits of the mountains were flooded with the cold silvery light of the moon, and every shrub and stone were clearly discernible, whilst the shadows were so dark that the fancy could easily people them with phantoms of mountain spirits.

When Graham reached the plateau from whence he could distinguish Louise's chalet in the distance, he saw a light burning in one

of the small casements. In a few moments he stood below the house, and, as he approached the door, suddenly the loud tones of an angry voice struck his ear. Two strides brought him to the window, which was of rude, coarse glass, but admitted of his seeing what passed within the cottage, and still better, of hearing what was said there. He felt at once that he had before him the very ideal of a brave woman.

Louise was standing beside her small, black hearth, almost touching its low vaulted roof. One of her hands was lowered to the fire, the other was extended with a menacing gesture towards the door of the cottage. Her head was no longer covered with a kerchief as it had been in the morning, and two rich plaits of golden hair fell upon her bare neck and shoulders, which were as white as her pale face. She would have been more like a statue than a living being, had not her blue eyes flashed fire. Now she parted her lips, and Graham felt a throb of gladness at being there to protect her, as he heard her exclaim :

"You will not come a step nearer if your life is dear to you. You may be thankful if I let you go out at that door without giving you a keepsake that will mark you for the rest of your life."

She bent down to the fire, and stretched out her hand to seize one of the flaming brands, but as she was bending low one of her long plaits fell forward, and took fire. She dropped the burning log, and caught her hair to extinguish the fire between her hands; and with a cry of triumph the Chevalier jumped to the hearth and caught the girl in his arms. Graham saw his form but a second—the next moment he had burst open the door, and sprung into the low kitchen. An iron hand had seized the Chevalier by the back of the neck, and shook him so violently that he was obliged to loosen his hold.

Then the two men faced each other. Graham stood cool and motionless, but the scornful curl of his lip and the burning glance of his eye told the Frenchman what he thought of him.

The Chevalier broke the silence.

"So then," he hissed out, between his lips, "I have a rival! Well, all the better. None but the brave deserve the fair! Come on, and let us fight it out at once."

They walked out into the moonlight, and Louise, followed them without saying a word. But when she saw that they were going to stand up in earnest, she threw herself between them, stretched out a hand towards them, and said :

"I am not going to let you quarrel about me. Neither of you has any right to suffer in my cause. I am very grateful to you, Mr. Graham, for having helped me. I should have had some trouble without your kind assistance, and perhaps the Chevalier a chastisement he would have remembered to his dying day. But it is all at an end now, and you must separate peacefully."

The two men stood motionless. It was evident that they in-

tended to carry out their quarrel at some more appropriate moment. The girl returned quickly into the *châlet*, put out the light, and came back in an instant, with a long cloak thrown over her shoulders. Then she locked the doors of both *châlet* and stables, and walking up to the gentlemen, resumed, in a decided tone:

"I'm going down with you. If I let you go alone, there would be bloodshed before you got home. Don't tell me to turn back, Mr. Graham, for when I have made up my mind to anything, no power on earth can change me. The walk will do me good."

The three walked over plateaux and through forests, down steep hills and over small springs, in dead silence for an hour at least. When the lighted windows of the Castle at last became visible, Louise said resolutely: "I am going to my father's house, and there someone will return with me. But I am not going to leave you yet," she added, as Graham stopped at the bottom of the broad flight of steps that led up to the entrance hall of the castle, and extended a hand to her. She ran hastily up them, and greeted one of the servants in the hall. "Good evening, Hans," she said. "I have brought you back two of your gentlemen who had lost their way in the night. Run and tell the Herr Graf that they are here."

The servant knew that his master was anxious about the Chevalier, and did as he was bid. The girl once more thanked Graham for the great service he had rendered her, turned, and was out of sight in a moment.

The party of gentlemen spent another half-hour together in the hall, before the host announced that it was time for bed, if the hunters intended to be at their several posts in time in the morning. The Frenchman knew how to put aside for the moment his recent discomfiture, and when he was offered this time the coveted place by the Vulture's Nest, he accepted it enthusiastically, and even cast a look of triumph upon Graham. The two then separated, and did not meet again that night.

The next morning Graham found only his host and two of the guests in the breakfast-room. The others, with the Frenchman among them, had left much earlier, as their posts were more distant. A rendezvous had been agreed upon, at which all were to meet in the afternoon, when the hunt was over. Graham left the Castle with the Count and two of the foresters, besides a servant who carried provisions for the day.

Graham and his host leisurely ascended the mountain, and, catching frequent glimpses of the beautifully green valleys below them, reached after a time a considerable height. Leaving the beaten track which had hitherto been their path on comparatively easy ground, a moment's respite was now necessary to make ready the trusty rifles, which had from this moment to be ever at hand, and might at any instant be called into play.

The Count himself, acquainted with every turn and stone of those

oft-trodden and favourite grounds, led the way, and after a few noiseless and cautious steps, the whole party paused again under the cloak of some dark, thick growing shrubs of the Alpenrosen kind, the wild rhododendron of the Alps, to peer over into the broken gorge below.

The gentlemen and the two attendant foresters adjusted each of them the ready telescope, and now with the utmost precision and care, each gully, each single out-jutting stone, and especially each smallest patch of bright inviting verdure, on which a chamois might possibly be still engaged in his morning repast, was eagerly scanned throughout the gorge. For had a single such outlying animal chanced to be left unperceived whilst the hunters a few minutes later descended to their destined post, the warning whistle of the startled game would have re-echoed and reverberated from rock to rock, and from hill to hill, reaching to almost incredible distances, till every head of chamois on the whole chasse would have been placed upon the *qui vive*, and all hope of sport for that day must have been abandoned.

The keen eyes, however, gazed in vain on every side, and the Count was on the point of rising to his feet and giving the order to advance, when a hand rested lightly and cautiously on his shoulder, and with a silent motion of the eye, but without daring to make the slightest sound or further gesture, the forester next to him pointed to a narrow ledge on the opposite side of the gully. Crouching still lower under the cover of the shrubs, each man holding his very breath from eagerness and excitement, each hunter fixed his anxious sight upon the spot indicated. The head, neck, and shoulder of a chamois, that had apparently that instant risen from his lair, were now plainly distinguishable, and a second later, issuing from behind a solitary out-jutting rock, a splendid chamois paced leisurely out. For a moment he paused and gazed around him—for a moment seemed to question the passing breath of air—then, apparently reassured, as leisurely resumed his course; reaching the grassy brow of the adjoining hill, he scaled it, and disappeared, evidently in fancied security.

"Graham," said the Count, "we may thank our stars that the wind was so favourable to us whilst that stupendous fellow was making his morning reconnaissance. Did you ever see so wary a creature? How anxiously he snuffed the tell-tale air! But we have not a moment to lose."

With that the whole party shouldered their rifles again, and set out—the Count himself, an experienced climber, leading the way. They reached their post in safety, and in good time. The attendant foresters stretched out plaids for the gentlemen to sit upon, and then themselves retired to a nook a pace or two behind, whence they could overlook the entire scene, and give timely notice of every incident.

Suddenly, after Graham had been patiently straining eyes and ears for two long hours, one of the foresters lightly touched his shoulder,



and pointed silently towards a mass of stone at some distance down the gully to the right. Graham's eager eye followed the direction, and espied two fine chamois, that, stationary and with heads erect, seemed to be scanning the ground, and on the look out for danger.

A few minutes later, on the very brow of the hill, appeared several other chamois, with the former splendid buck in their midst. They came leisurely along—paused, approached to the very verge, in order to peer over into the precipice—and then retreated again. They were evidently in no alarm, and soon some of the young kids of the party began to clip the dewy grass, or to sport among themselves with light and graceful gambols.

The four hunters, carefully concealed, never for a moment detached their eyes from the interesting group, which now approached a narrow but deep fissure in the rock, filled with still unmelted snow. Towards this they all bent down, and were soon most busily engaged.

Some anxious time passed thus, when the Count exclaimed: "They are not in the least alarmed, and are quietly licking the snow, which all chamois are so specially fond of. But, if no further sound of the drivers below should chance to reach that favoured spot, they may remain there for hours; which would hardly suit us, Graham. Berger," he added, "send your companion round to try and startle them. But let him be cautious, and be sure not to be observed."

Away went Lepperl on his delicate mission, but so quietly that not even Graham and the Count, though so close to him, could catch the sound of his retreating steps.

For half an hour still the chamois remained upon the grassy plot, where some of them laid themselves down to rest, without suspicion that the hunter's eye was upon them, whilst the two sportsmen watched with breathless anxiety, their hands upon their rifles. Suddenly a movement of evident alarm was noticed among the chamois. A shrill and piercing whistle re-echoed through the gorge, and with one simultaneous bound, the whole of the little troop was in motion, dashing among the rocks, scarcely touching the ground with their elastic hoofs, and seeming to fly, rather than spring, over yawning gaps and abysses, where no living man could have followed.

One large, sagacious doe, the matron of the group, had fearlessly sprung to the head, and was now leading the desperate flight. Straight as an arrow from a bow she made for old Berger's fatal strip of white rock, with the bounding water rill. But just as they were on the point of reaching it, the simultaneous peal of two shots resounded, their number was reduced by one, and the big buck had "bitten the dust." Both Graham and the Count had fired, but evidently one of the two had missed his aim.

The last trace of the retreating game had disappeared, and the Count, rising from his seat, said to his friend: "I am delighted to tell you, Graham, that it was you who dropped the splendid buck that is lying over there, for I purposely and most willingly left him for my

honoured guest, and aimed at the one beside him. I much fear that my shot did not take effect, for I confess to you that I am somewhat out of sorts. Do you know that a vague feeling of anxiety has come over me, and my thoughts have for some time back been with our young Frenchman. There is a terrible presentiment of evil upon me. I have felt it once before in my life, and then it was only too sadly fulfilled. I hardly know why, but I have actually been regretting that I allowed him to go to the Vulture's Nest! Yet you yourself saw how pressing he was; it would really have seemed inhospitable and ungracious on my part to oppose him. However, though it is still early," he added, as he drew out and looked at his watch, "let us set off at once for our appointed place of meeting. Some of the party are almost sure to be already there, and from them we may possibly hear also about the others."

It was a pleasant saunter that the two gentlemen had now before them, and they further enlivened it by many a stirring tale of hunting life. Graham thought he had never enjoyed a cigar so fully as during the good hour's walk which brought them to the trysting tree.

The Count and Graham emerged from the forest on to a beautiful green meadow; not unlike the one upon which stood Louise's chalet. In the midst of it rose a group of old pines, and under them were assembled several of the Count's guests, a few of the foresters, and some also of the peasants who had taken part in the drive. They were all pressing round some object in their centre, and all eyes were directed to a spot hidden from the view of Graham and his host.

Suddenly someone remarked the Count's approach, and told the others of it. One of the gentlemen thereupon left the group, and walked towards the new comers. But the expression of his countenance foretold some sad tale, and his lips only too soon confirmed it.

"It is the Chevalier," he said, "and we fear he is quite dead. No one knows how the accident happened, for he was alone upon his post. But a young girl who lives in a chalet upon the hill must have watched him, for it was she who gave the first tidings of his fall. She heard his rifle shot, she tells us, and saw some chamois flying past on the opposite side of the mountain, but when she looked over the edge of the precipice, the Chevalier had disappeared."

"Good heavens, how dreadful! Let us hope it is not so bad as you suppose," exclaimed the Count, as he and Graham hastened up to the assembled group. The Count murmured some further inaudible words as he approached nearer, and then knelt down by the young, and, alas, shattered corpse.

And Graham! He was deeply shocked on hearing the melancholy tidings, and the very next moment felt as though it was his own death that was being announced to the Count; as though the accident had not happened to the Chevalier but to himself. What

good angels had been busy in his behalf to save him from so terrible a fate?

Very little did Douglas Graham sleep that night. His thoughts most obstinately turned upon one subject only, and the presence of that young man's dead body in the house made them gloomy and solemn. He could not help remembering that but for Louise's warning, his life would probably have been at an end by this time, and while he shuddered at the thought, a great tenderness for Louise crept into his heart. He felt that there was nothing on his part he would not have done to show the girl his gratitude, that no sacrifice would be too great to reward her.

Just as the sun rose over the mountains and filled all the country around with a bright glow, he descended the hall terrace, and directed his steps through the dewy park towards the village. Early as it was, he found Louise busy in her flower-garden. She was very pale, it is true, but as neat and pretty as ever. Her smile had changed very much since the first day he had seen her: it looked melancholy now, and the brightness of youth that shone forth from her eye on that fine Sunday morning had given place to a serious expression, which did not change when she came to the garden hedge of wild roses and extended her hand to her foreign friend. Graham held the hand in his own for a little while, and when he released it, he said:

"I am glad to see you, Louise, and have come to thank you for the warning you gave me, which has proved so useful to me, and so fatal to that young Frenchman. Alas! no warning would have been of use to him, for no power on earth could have prevented him from taking the post."

"So Johann from the castle tells me," replied Louise, in low, sad tones. "He heard him speak to you about his courage and his disappointment at not being allowed to take the post at the Vulture's Nest."

Graham looked inquiringly into the pretty girl's face. It was no longer pale, but suffused with lovely blushes, that she seemed to feel, and that increased her embarrassment. Graham approached her as much as he could with those rose-bushes between them, and taking her hand and speaking softly, said:

"Louise, look at me. What are you blushing about? Do not turn away from me, for if I cannot see you I can never be sure whether I guess aright. It is nothing so very strange after all, and before I knew that that fine fellow Jockl was your brother, I had made up my mind that he was the lucky one. It is wonderful indeed that your heart has been free so long."

Another inquiring glance, which was responded to by just one look, then the girl blushed again and said:

"Oh, it is an old story, only I had not been well aware of it myself."

Graham almost dropped her hand at those words, but he mustered up his courage, and bade her tell him all. She heaved a sigh, bent her head low, and whispered her heart's secret to him.

"I always liked Johann from the castle, long before he entered the Count's service, but I never knew I cared for him so very much until yesterday. I had seen him go to the post by the Vulture's Nest with the Frenchman, and he did not return past my chalet; so when I heard that shot and the fall, I for a moment imagined it might have been Johann, and not till the evening could I be quite sure that he was safe. I have never passed such anxious hours in all my life, not even at my mother's deathbed, which although it grieved us all so deeply, was to her a release from suffering."

She had been silent for some time, and yet not a word came from the lips of the man whom she had honoured with her confidence. At last she timidly looked up into his face. He was smiling sadly; then he kissed her hand before she could withdraw it, and after another pause, he murmured:

"Do you know what I was going to say before you told me about Johann from the castle?"

Louise looked frightened, and then with a forced smile and with much hesitation she managed to answer:

"Do you not think you had better not say it now that I have told you all?"

"You are right, Louise; but you will *not* forget that your name is inscribed in my heart for all time! Good-bye, if I stay I shall disobey you and say too much. Good-bye!"

He did not see the tears that started to the girl's eyes, nor how she turned to hide them, lest he should look back once more.

A very short time afterwards Louise married Johann, who was no longer Johann from the castle, but a forester, with a pretty house of his own, surmounted by a splendid deer's antlers, a "sixteenender" whom Johann killed the day he won his bride. The house is handsomer and much more comfortable than those of the other foresters, and yet Douglas Graham is in despair because Louise will not allow him to do her the least kindness. But Louise is right; if she gave way to the generous Englishman's fancies her forester's house would be changed into a small palace in a very short time.

On the day of the wedding, at which Graham was not present, the Count signed a document which was to be preserved in the Castle-library, and which enjoined all the future proprietors of the place never again to place a hunter upon the *Post by the Vulture's Nest*.

## EXMOOR AND ITS PEOPLE.

PROBABLY many people, even in London, are not aware that, within a comparatively short day's journey exists in England a region, the inhabitants of which in their thoughts, ways, and customs, are almost as far removed from them as the men and women of the days of Queen Anne. This region lies in the west of England, in that part of Somersetshire which borders North Devon. It comprises the wide, uncultivated tract of Exmoor, Dunkerry—the highest point in the West—and the country which immediately surrounds it.

In winter, when a heavy curtain of mist spreads far and near; or when the rain comes sweeping along, driven by the rough hand of the west wind; or when a bold, strong north-easter piles up the snow upon the more open ground, the moor and the heath are certainly not desirable places to find yourself upon: especially when a grey November day is growing towards its close. Yet, even at these times, this district has its own peculiar charms, when the hills and the moorland are turned, by storm and fog, into a strange wonderland.

It is a morning of dense mist, and even the Exmoor native at our side can hardly find his way across the heather on the spur of Dunkerry over which our way is leading us. We appear to be shut out from the whole world by this impenetrable wall around us. We can see nothing but the yard of brown heath beneath our feet, hear nothing but a faint stirring, where the wind is moving the furze bushes near at hand. The murmur of the little stream, which rises in the heather hard by, is full of vague mystery when we catch its indistinct voice, which is the next sound that reaches us. Are they the tones of some spirit warning us? We do not know what to fancy, or what to dream, or what to expect. A wondrous surprise is, in truth, being prepared for us, but a surprise which is very different from any of these.

All at once, just when it seems thickest and most hopeless, there is a rift in the heavy curtain; the fog goes rolling away on either side. Without being aware of it we have reached the slope of the hill, and are just over-hanging one of the deep valleys which form a special feature of the whole country, and which, when they are small and narrow, are called "combes." As the veil of fog parts asunder, there suddenly appears before us the warm hollow, which is still green, here, in the damp, mild west, even in winter; a little homestead nestling cosily among its brown ricks, and a belt of low woodland; a stream winding with many a capricious turn, and glinting, as it goes, in a gleam of sunshine which has filtered in through



the mist ; a bit of narrow, stony path which goes climbing down from the hill-side opposite, and upon which an Exmoor pony is picking his way dextrously along, bearing a rider who seems well used to the situation. On each side of the picture the mist is rolling like a grey sea, framing it in, as though the valley were an island shut far away from the rest of the world. We have scarcely gazed, have scarcely wondered, when the whole is once more swept out of sight. Again we are walled in by thick fog, and nothing but its grey folds meet our eye, turn which way we may in our amazed bewilderment.

But if there are rare attractions on Exmoor and its neighbouring hills, even in winter, how shall we describe what a golden summer day is like spent amid these scenes ?

After a long ascent in the burning sun, we reach at last the cairn of stones on the summit of Dunkerry, which is called the Beacon, and which is said to be formed from the remains of the three great fire-places on which the beacon fires used to be kindled to warn the country round in old days of war and trouble, and to be answered by other beacon lights shining far away on the Welsh mountains across the channel. We fling ourselves down upon the purple heather, glancing about a little anxiously at first to assure our nervous minds that there are no adders lurking near ; for such unpleasant neighbours are frequently to be found on our western hills in warm, summer weather. When we have thus comfortably settled ourselves, let us first look at the soft carpet on which we are lying : a rich and wondrous carpet indeed. The heath is a deeper, more regal hue than any mantle ever worn by an eastern king ; and it is all interwoven with the gold of the gorse, and the small white flowers of the dodder, and the rare, beautiful stag's-horn moss, which is sought so eagerly by botanists, and which grows here in such size and perfection, flinging itself about in wild abundance. It is much loved and prized by the west country people themselves, and is always used by them when they want to produce an effect in the way of decoration. The Exmoor lad twists it round his best hat when he goes courting, and the Exmoor girl gathers it to twine about the pillars of the country church on days of village festival or glad harvest-thanks-giving.

But strange and beautiful though our couch is, we must not spend our whole time in examining it. We will lift our heads and first notice with delight the rare freshness, yet softness of the breeze, which is so bracing that it is like a draught of champagne, yet so mild that it seems to have a breath from the distant south mixed with it. There is a briny flavour, too, in this wind, for it has come bounding across the green Atlantic, and sweeping up the channel, and then has leapt up the hill-sides to greet us here. Mindful of this message from the ocean, our eyes wander quickly across green meadow, and upland farm, and valley filled with variously-tinted foliage, till they reach the channel. There is the column of smoke



which tells of the passing of some large steamer, moving swiftly towards Bristol: bearing home, it may be, from distant colonies some of our hill country folk, who left us years ago bright lads and lasses, and are now returning grave, care-worn men and women. There, too, are many gleaming sails flitting up and down, and there, beyond all, rise the Welsh mountains, filling our fancies with dreams about the Cimri. Among them all stands out the Sugar-loaf, conspicuous from its quaint shape.

Tired with gazing, we sink back on our heathery bed and float down a stream of idle musing, as we listen to the hum of the bees that are so busy, this sunny day, gathering the honey to which the heather gives such a peculiar, aromatic flavour.

All at once we are disturbed by merry children's voices near us, and we rouse ourselves and look round. The new-comers wear such shabby, not to say ragged frocks and jackets, that, at first sight, an uncomfortable notion concerning a troop of professional beggars begins to haunt us. But there is nothing of a beggar's whine or beggar's shuffle in the laughter which comes ringing towards us on the breeze, in the steps which dance lightly over the heather; there is nothing either of poverty or want in those smiling, sunburnt faces. These are the whortleberry gatherers, who, at this season, come from all the neighbouring villages both of hill and valley to pick the fruit which grows on a little stiff bush in among the heath, during the period when the whortleberries are ripe, which is August and September.

Every village school round about Dunkerry and Exmoor is closed, for the simple reason that, if it were kept open, not a single child would set foot within its doors. They are all sent out whortleberry picking by their parents, dressed in their very oldest and most dilapidated clothes; for the occupation naturally involves many a soil and many a tear, and the thrifty west country matron knows better than to allow best garments to be exposed to such dangers. The profit made by whortleberry gathering is often considerable. Carts come round to the different villages to buy the fruit, which is carried off to our large manufacturing towns, and there used to make a rich purple dye. Small quantities of it are also sold for the table—whortleberry tart and clotted cream being a dish highly appreciated by west country men and women. A hill country child will often earn her Sunday costume for the whole year by her whortleberry gathering, and one small parish last season calculated that the total gains of the boys and girls of the village amounted to above £30. The whortleberry is sweet and mild in taste. The lips of profane strangers sometimes pronounce it insipid, but this is most rank heresy in a west country house, and the visitor who holds such an opinion had best keep it to himself.

But to return to our seat on the top of Dunkerry, from which the whortleberry has made us wander for a while.

We have watched the merry children at their work, till we are tired. We have sunk back again upon the heath, and are feeling a little inclined for a mid-day doze, when something happens which drives sleep most effectually away from our eyes. There is a light sound near us, as of swift-trampling feet which tread briskly the heather. We look up enquiringly. There, at no great distance from us, a herd of red-deer are crossing the brow of the hill, led by a grand old antlered hero whose head rejoices in the glories of brow, bay, and tray, the way in which a west country sportsman describes a stag's horns which have attained to highest fulness of age and honour. What fine, noble-looking inhabitants of the heath and the woodland these are, and how, somehow, the mere sight of them carries our minds back to old days of chivalry and romance!

We have not, however, here in West Somerset, any need to go back through centuries to know what a stag-hunt among the hills is like. To-morrow these very solitudes will be ringing with the sound of horn and hound, and with the huntsman's shout, and a gallant troop of ladies and gentlemen will be galloping over the heather, while one of these same deer, which we now see pause to browse so peacefully, will be flying in front. It is a sport which seems to fascinate irresistibly all those who have once joined in it, and season after season its votaries return and return again. Ladies are often seen in the foremost flight across the moor, and many a west country maiden has been wooed and won, by a suitor from a distant county, during a long moonlight ride home from stag-hunting. The stag often runs far, so that the finish is often many miles from the meet.

One of the chief dangers of a gallop over the moor is the boggy ground which so frequently intersects it. There are on Exmoor and on Dunkerry, bogs so deep, that to sink into them, if no friendly aid was near, would be an experience full of real peril for both horse and rider. All boggy ground is, moreover, full of dangerous attraction for the unwary, as it always presents to the eye a tract of tempting green which seems to invite to a canter. When the Prince of Wales honoured the west country with a visit, he was given, as his leader across the moor, the most experienced hill country rider in West Somerset, a bog being the chief thing dreaded for him by loyal Exmoor hearts.

The country immediately round about Exmoor and Dunkerry partakes very much of the character of Devonshire in many respects. It has hills which can rival Devonshire hills in length and steepness, and it has lanes which can rival Devonshire lanes in the height of their banks, and their eccentric, winding proclivities. These high banks are perfect drawing-rooms of rare wild flowers, and still rarer ferns; looking into their wonders is, for the botanist, like seeing the realization of a beautiful, impossible dream. On every side some princess of the great flower family beckons to him, delicate green mosses twinkle him merry greetings; the vast society of the ferns lie

in languid grace around him, each more bewitching than her sister. Another charming peculiarity of this favoured region is the number of bright, rapid, petulant little streams, which sparkle, and murmur, and bubble, and whisper, and chatter, and leap, and glide, and twist hither and thither, and appear suddenly in the most unexpected places, just when, having followed their course for a while, we think we have parted company with them for good.

The beautiful Exmoor ponies are a marked feature of Exmoor and its neighbourhood, they are a breed of very handsome, very spirited, tiny horses; their shape is perfect and their action leaves nothing to be desired, and their little heads, with the bright, full eyes, and fine mobile ears, bring to mind the Arab horses. They are not by any means easy to ride, for they are remarkable for a wriggling, rapid way of moving, and they shy badly at the smallest provocation, seeming to see a ghost in every shadow, and to hear a lurking brigand in every faintest rustle. Their wild life on Exmoor, and the equally wild life of their ancestors for many generations have, no doubt, produced these habits.

The dwellers on Exmoor and in its neighbourhood are in many respects a race apart. They have often the dark hair and eyes which give an almost southern type to the people of North Devon, their accent has something French about its peculiar intonation, and they have many words of their own which no one would understand who had not been for some time naturalized among them. Their modes and terms of expression are also very quaint and singular, and their very amusements have something old-world about them. Their favourite dances enjoy such names as "The Lady's Breast-knot," "The Fox Hunt," "The Queen's Quadrilles," "The Stoning Steps;" their intricacies of figure defy comprehension by all save a born west-country head. They are often, however, very pretty and interesting to the eyes of the looker-on; and there is one dance, called "The Pocket-handkerchief Dance," which, in its grace of movement, brings to mind the dances of the Spanish peasantry.

Many of the west country customs are very pretty and suggestive, and have a touch of real poetry about them. The sheep-shearing is always a festival in an Exmoor farm-house. The daughters of the family, after having displayed their highest art as cooks in the preparation of the supper, adorn themselves in all their gayest finery, and then do all that they can to ensure their lovers and brothers being suitable partners for them in the dance which is to come by-and-bye.

Before the door of the house is placed a large tub full of fresh water, in which are floating all kinds of sweet, aromatic herbs, and close to this is a primitive toilette table, which is well provided with brush and comb and glass. Here the young village dandies make themselves gay and spruce before they seek the fair presence of their lady-loves. Every Christmas day the animals in the west country farm-yard are all given, in honour to the holy morning, a double quantity of food. In

harvest time, when the last sheaf is bound up, everyone in the field joins in a loud, ringing, joyful shout, which is meant to proclaim the news to the whole neighbourhood.

Such are some of their strange, old-fashioned usages, and there are many more which we have not space to chronicle here.

The west country folk are full of superstitious observances, and strange superstitions and beliefs. On the night before Twelfth day, it is fully believed by every west country man and woman, that the master bullock of the herd, exactly as midnight strikes, lows three times solemnly, and goes down on his knees before the manger. When they are ill, they would far rather go to a seventh son or daughter to be cured than to a doctor. When a little bird chirps near a window, it is a sure sign of death; so it is when the bees die unexpectedly; so it is when the cocks crow at night; so it is when a luckless individual fails to hear the cuckoo before Midsummer day.

If you give a west country boy a knife, you can never be friends again unless he returns you for it a copper coin. There are witches here in the land, and though they can go to church, they can never turn toward the east while they are there. If the death-bell tolls in some peculiar fashion, only known to the initiated, it is a certain token that someone else will soon die in the parish. If you want to know who are going to depart this life in the village during the present year, you have but to sit up in the church porch on Midsummer eve, and you will see them all pass by. If a west country girl wishes to know which of her lovers is true, she picks a rose on Midsummer day, and wears it on her breast to church on Christmas day, and he will be sure to come and take it from her bosom, and she may trust him ever after. If an old woman in the west has rheumatism, she can always cure it by wearing a toad's leg in a bag round her neck as a charm.

As for dreams, the mind grows uncomfortably bewildered as the west country dame goes through her experiences on this point, and tells us of what we may dream and of what we may not, and relates how, on various occasions, "her dream was out," which is the approved west country way of saying that a dream comes true.

The manners of the west country folk to strangers are always courteous, but frequently marked with a certain reticence. Many of them have a vague mistrust of everything and everyone they are not accustomed to; it is sure to take a considerable time to win even their partial confidence when you settle among them. In mind they are a singular mixture of shrewdness and simplicity. They will see through you in a moment if you try to cheat them or make fun of them, and yet many of them live in the most utter ignorance of ways and ideas which are as commonplace as air and sunshine to the dwellers in towns, or in regions that are nearer to the sound of the great world. They have often spent years without going more than a few miles beyond their native parish, and a journey to Taunton is

a solemn event in their lives. If you are their superior in rank they will begin every sentence they address to you, whatever may be its nature, with "If you please, sir;" in this way they will commence a statement that your house is burnt down, or your favourite horse is dead. They have one or two habits of speech which are, to say the least of it, a trifle provoking to the ears of a stranger, who does not know their real meaning; such as their answering calmly, that they like a thing "very well," when you feel that they ought to be in raptures about it; and their replying about anything "Yes, I expect," spoken rather slowly and languidly, when you want to get from them a brisk "Yes, I am certain."

The fare which Exmoor and its neighbourhood can supply to tourists is certainly not to be despised. What butter in the world is like the rich, solid butter of a Devonshire or Exmoor dairy? it may have a slight flavour of smoke, sometimes, but then this is regarded as a delicate addition by real west country folk. Then there is the thick clotted cream, on which the farmers' daughters pride themselves upon piling up as many pence as they have in their pockets without their sinking in. Besides these good things, there are the trout which are caught in all the little streams and brooks of which we have spoken further back; and last, not least, there is the Exmoor mutton, which is a worthy rival to Welsh mutton in every respect. The little Exmoor horned sheep share the moor with the red deer.

Not so very many years have gone by since an old man was buried in a west country churchyard, who could recollect the sensation caused in his native village, a village on the borders of Exmoor, when the first wagon drove up its street. In days not very remote, the whole of the carriage of this steep, hilly country was done by pack-horses, who used to bring in the hay and corn from the fields laden upon their backs. In those times the west country folk were most bold and incorrigible smugglers. When the contraband goods were landed by night on some quiet part of the shore, they were at once placed upon the pack-horses which were waiting for them, and the clever animals, who were as remarkable for their intelligence as they were for their strength and beauty, would each trot home by himself as quickly as he could to his own master's yard.

A railway, with which the most retired valleys among the hills are threatened, the march of modern progress, the rising tide of education, all these things are tending to make this region become, in time, like other parts of England; but before this is the case, let all those who want a breath of freshness, of poetry and romance in these dusty, prosaic days, come and visit Exmoor and its people.

ALICE KING.



## SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE.

BY CHARLES HERVEY.

ON a bright August afternoon a year or two ago, one of the squares abutting on the Lees at Folkestone was thronged with a miscellaneous assemblage of visitors, strolling about or sitting in groups, and listening to a lively selection from "Olivette" played with unflagging spirit by the band of a regiment quartered at Shorncliffe.

Among the latest arrivals was a good-looking young man in a travelling suit. After pausing for a few minutes at the entrance, as if undecided whether to go in or not, he quietly made his way through the crowd, and, securing a post of vantage in a temporarily secluded part of the garden, glanced rather listlessly than curiously at the animated scene before him. He had not been there long when he felt a hand on his shoulder, and turning round beheld, to his evident dissatisfaction, a stout, smirking individual—Tommy Gableton, the most notorious gossip and scandal-monger since the days of Crabtree and Sir Benjamin—who accosted him with a familiar :

"Hullo, Torrens, who in the world would have thought of seeing you here ! They told me you were at Homburg."

"So I was until yesterday," replied the other. "Only arrived this morning."

"Quite right to look us up on your way to Scotland," rattled on Tommy ; "for of course you are off to the moors. Nothing like laying in a provision of oxygen," he continued without waiting for an answer. "I always do at this time of year ; and for that sort of thing there's no better place than Folkestone. By the bye,"—here his sly puckered face assumed a semi-mysterious expression—"perhaps you don't know that Miss Trevelyan is here ?"

"Indeed !" said Torrens, in a studiously indifferent tone. "I was not aware of it."

"Yes, and what's more, she is sitting yonder, not twenty yards from us with her aunt, Mrs. Mortimer, and—ahem !—Gerestein. I thought it best to give you a hint, as under the circumstances a meeting might be unpleasant, you know."

"On the contrary," was the young man's unexpected answer, "I shall be delighted to see Miss Trevelyan. And, following his not a little astonished guide, he soon found himself in the presence of the trio in question, consisting of a strikingly handsome girl, elaborately attired in one of M. Worth's latest "creations," a middle-aged chaperon, and a stout, over-dressed personage of unmistakably Teuton nationality.

"I have brought you an old acquaintance, ladies," said Gableton,



with an insufferably self-satisfied grin. "Our friend Torrens has just landed, and is impatient to present his homage at the shrine of beauty. A charming surprise, isn't it?"

If one might judge from the effect produced on the three sitters by this introduction of the new comer, the surprise prepared for them was startling rather than agreeable. Each of the party betrayed in a greater or lesser degree very decided symptoms of embarrassment. Mrs. Mortimer blushed through her pearl powder, her niece turned ashy pale, while Herr Gerestein fidgeted uncomfortably on his chair, and glanced at the stranger with a distrustful eye. The only person—excepting, of course, the irrepressible Tommy—who appeared thoroughly at his ease was Torrens himself. After a courteous salutation addressed to both ladies, and the slightest possible acknowledgment of the German's sulky inclination of the head, he took his seat beside Miss Trevelyan, and entered into conversation with her in a low tone.

"I suppose I ought to congratulate you," he began, as unconcerned as if he were alluding to the fineness of the weather, and looking at her full in the face as he spoke. "It is rather late in the day, perhaps, but the news of your engagement only reached me a week ago."

"You can do as you like," she replied, nervously toying with her parasol, and evidently struggling hard to maintain her composure. "I can scarcely expect you to take any interest *now* in what concerns me."

"You are wrong, Gertrude," said Torrens, gravely, but kindly. "A man must always feel interested in the future of a girl he has loved, even when," he added with a slight shade of bitterness in his voice, "he has been deliberately thrown over. I am not reproaching you," he continued, in answer to a pleading look from her beautiful eyes. "I perfectly understand that you have preferred the substance to the shadow, and acknowledge my inferiority. It is not probable that we shall meet again, for some time at least; but, believe me, I sincerely trust that the path you have chosen may be a happy one."

With these words, and a cordial grasp of her hand, he rose from his seat, and alleging to Mrs. Mortimer, by way of excuse for his departure, his wish to catch the evening train, soon after left the gardens.

"He takes it coolly enough, I must say," muttered Gableton to himself, "and by jove, he's well out of it. Unless I am very much mistaken, if this match ever does come off, it's my private opinion that our friend Gerestein will find that he has got a handful!"

It was the old story of love versus lucre, a contest for supremacy too often resulting, as in the present instance, in the triumph of the latter. That Egerton Torrens, a younger son and a briefless bar-

rist, with little to recommend him but his good looks and a recognised position in society, should have fallen a victim to the charms of Gertrude Trevelyan, one of the prettiest girls of the season, was in the established order of things. That their intimacy should have ripened into something more than a mere ball-room flirtation, was equally intelligible. But that either of them should have imagined the possibility of reviving the exploded chimera of "love in a cottage," would in the eyes of the world have been simply preposterous. Gertrude, an orphan and entirely dependent on her aunt, was destined, according to the immutable ideas of that ambitious and scheming matron, to recoup her by an advantageous marriage for the cost of her maintenance and the anxiety inseparable from the office of chaperon.

It was therefore Mrs. Mortimer's bounden duty to discourage by every means in her power the palpable absurdity of a misplaced familiarity on the part of her niece with anyone so notoriously ineligible as a "detrimental."

Fortunately for her projects, matters had not gone so far as to render her interference ineffectual.

The lovers were still contentedly enjoying the present without troubling themselves overmuch about the future; nor indeed would the question of ways and means, if it had happened to be discussed by them, have presented itself to either in a particularly reassuring light. As far as Gertrude was concerned, she had literally no better expectancies than the milkmaid in the song; while the few hundreds a year that Torrens could call his own, an income barely sufficient for his bachelor wants, could by no stretch of ingenuity be relied upon to satisfy the requirements of a Benedict. This he knew perfectly well, but the temptation was too strong for him. One glance from the damsel's bright eyes, one clasp of her hand, put to flight in an instant all prudential considerations, and left him more hopelessly entangled in the toils than ever.

On her side Miss Trevelyan, although fully appreciating the exclusive privilege of monopolising the attentions of one of the handsomest men and best waltzers in London, and far from disinclined to indulge in a personal experience of "love's young dream," was not altogether insensible to the effect produced by her beauty on the world at large. She could not for the life of her refrain from certain displays of feminine coquetry which in reality meant nothing, but appeared to mean a great deal.

This had the two-fold result of arousing Egerton's jealousy, and of satisfying Mrs. Mortimer that she had still material to work upon; more especially as her arguments were backed by the advent of a powerful auxiliary in the person of Hermann Gerestein, the head of an Anglo-German house in the City, and a professed admirer of her niece. No one knew exactly who he was, or how he had made his money; but as common report credited him with the possession of

a considerable fortune, and his recent purchase of a mansion in Park Lane was an indisputable fact, people in general were content to take his solvency for granted, and asked no further questions about him.

That Gertrude was flattered by his undisguised homage her aunt saw plainly enough, and lost no opportunity of profiting by it. His wealth and the manifold advantages derivable therefrom were continually dwelt upon by the manœuvring lady, and the absolute folly of throwing such a chance away was, persistently hinted at. Little by little the object of her importunities began involuntarily to compare the brilliant prospect held out to her with the undesirable position of a poor man's wife, to whom a house in Park Lane must needs be a myth, and a modest home in an unfashionable quarter of the town an unavoidable necessity.

Torrens was not slow either to perceive the change in her manner, or to guess its cause. The city magnate's devotion to Miss Trevelyan had of late been too marked to admit of any doubt as to his intentions. By way, therefore, of bringing matters to a crisis, he abruptly taxed her with inconstancy; and, carried away by his feelings, urged his prior claims to her affection in so resentful a tone that at length, stung by his reproaches, she haughtily repudiated the idea of any engagement on her part, and gave him clearly to understand that she considered herself bound to reciprocate his attachment by no tie or promise whatsoever.

Shortly after this decisive rejection Egerton started for the Continent, and for the next two or three months strove to forget his disappointment by wandering about from place to place until the day when, as we have seen, he and Gertrude unexpectedly met each other at Folkestone.

His reflections, as he was whirled away northward on the following morning with the usual rapidity of the "Flying Scotchman," were by no means of a pleasurable character. Even the alluring prospect of his favourite sport on the moors failed to divert his mind from the trying interview of the preceding afternoon. It had revived all the painful memories of the past, which he had vainly imagined were forgotten. Secure as he felt himself from any return of his infatuation, he nevertheless bitterly regretted that chance should have again thrown them together, and once more exposed him to the perilous influence of her beauty. Time, however, and the congenial society of a joyous band, roughing it with true sportsmanlike equanimity in an anomalous structure by courtesy called a shooting box, gradually acted as a panacea on his over-strung imagination. The presence, moreover, of a "ministering angel," in the person of his host's sister, who presided over the household arrangements of the improvised establishment, contributed not a little to distract his thoughts from the one idea which had hitherto exclusively pre-occupied them.

Annie Thornton, a bright-eyed, fair-haired lassie, in her capacity of general purveyor to the requirements of her guests, was precisely the right girl in the right place. Without being strictly pretty, she had a winning charm of manner, rendered still more attractive by a soft, low voice, "an excellent thing in woman," the soothing influence of which one of her visitors at least was fully capable of appreciating.

No more effectual cure for a "mind diseased" could have been devised than the society of, in every respect, so sympathetic a hostess. Before a fortnight had elapsed since his arrival, Egerton began to regard a stroll on the heather in her company as infinitely preferable to the best day's sport, and—although he would hardly have ventured to confess a much—had a dawning perception that the image of Gertrude Trevelyan was in imminent danger of being permanently replaced by that of Annie Thornton.

The idea that this might possibly be the case both startled and embarrassed him, and he felt half inclined to put himself out of the way of temptation by inventing a plausible excuse for his immediate return to London. He was not vain enough to imagine that after so short an acquaintance he had succeeded in producing a favourable impression, and had no fancy for being rejected a second time. Thus, inclination pointing one way and a by no means pleasant experience the other, he resembled a traveller between two cross roads, uncertain which to take, and looking in vain for a finger-post to indicate the right one.

A solution of the difficulty, however, was at hand, and coming from a totally unexpected quarter.

One evening, when—Harcourt and Stansbury, the two other guests, had retired early to rest after a hard day's deer-stalking—he and Fred Thornton were enjoying a final pipe together, the latter with apparent unconcern asked his friend what his plans were on leaving Scotland.

"Nothing fixed," replied Egerton; "haven't thought of them yet."

"Ah," said Fred, "it's lucky that some one has thought of them for you. Shall I tell you what you are going to do? You are going to marry Annie."

"Annie!" echoed Torrens, staring at the speaker as if in doubt whether he had heard aright. "Miss Thornton!"

"Miss Thornton, if you prefer it," coolly retorted his companion. "Do you suppose I have no eyes?"

"I don't understand," stammered out Egerton.

"Yes you do. Now, let us be logical. What do people generally come to the moors for? Sport. How many times have you been out with us since you came? Three or four at most. Ergo, you have found metal more attractive elsewhere. Is that clear or not?"

"I assure you, I have never said a word ——"

"That's your own fault," interrupted Fred. "As this doesn't happen to be leap year, you couldn't expect her to say it for you

could you? Joking apart," he continued, in a more earnest tone, "I have set my heart on having my old chum for a brother-in-law, and for two very good reasons: first, because I have a strong suspicion that you like Annie, and secondly, because I am certain Annie likes you."

"Did she tell you so?" eagerly inquired Egerton.

"Never mind. Perhaps she will tell *you* if you ask her; and, between ourselves, I shouldn't be in the least surprised if you did so to-morrow."

"Nor I," said Torrens, heartily; and with a cordial shake of the hand the friends separated for the night.

That the result of the projected interview proved entirely satisfactory to both parties concerned may be inferred from our hero's departure at the end of the week for his father's seat in Cheshire, by way of personally announcing his intended marriage. "A mere matter of form," he said to Fred. "Beyond making me a younger son's allowance of five hundred a year, the governor troubles himself very little about my concerns. Whether I take to myself a wife or remain single, it is perfectly indifferent to him. If I were my brother Augustus and heir to Somerton, any such step on my part would be an *affaire d'état*; but as it is, if, like Lord Privilege in 'Peter Simple,' he holds out two fingers instead of one, I shall consider myself highly honoured."

Things, however, turned out far better than Egerton had anticipated. On hearing that the fiancée was the daughter of his old acquaintance, Admiral Thornton, Mr. Torrens senior deigned to express his approval of the match, and, moreover, graciously signified his intention of increasing his son's allowance to a thousand a year: which, thought the latter, together with Annie's modest portion, would enable them to set up housekeeping pretty comfortably. He betook himself, therefore, after a stay of several days, to town in high spirits.

The train from Scotland by which his bride elect and her brother were travelling not being yet due, he strolled into his club, where the first person he met was the inevitable Tommy Gableton, who fastened on him like a leech.

"You have heard the news?" he gasped in a tremor of excitement.

"What news?" asked Torrens, smiling at the little man's agitation. "Anything fresh from Zululand?"

"Bother Zululand!" retorted Tommy, indignantly. "Gerestein has bolted!"

"Bolted! what on earth do you mean?"

"Given his creditors leg-bail, if you like it better," pursued Tommy. "The most complete smash the city has known for years. Offices closed, and not a shilling in the shape of assets!"

"You do astonish me," said Egerton. "Gerestein the millionaire!"



"Millionaire, pooh ! a sham, sir, a most iniquitous sham. How he managed to keep afloat so long is a puzzle to everyone ; but now the bubble's burst, the house in Park Lane in the market, and not a stick of furniture paid for."

"And Gertrude—Miss Trevelyan, how does she bear it?"

"Ah, rather a come down for her, isn't it?" chuckled Gabbleton, maliciously. "Match broken off, of course, and Mrs. Mortimer's poky drawing-room in Bryanston Street, instead of a boudoir looking on the park. But I wouldn't pity her if I were you. She's not a Calypso, *qui ne pouvait se consoler*, you know." Tommy was proud of his French, which he spoke with an accent atrociously savouring of home manufacture. "Quite the reverse, I should say. Depend upon it, she has a substitute in her eye already ; and Heaven help him, whoever he is ! Return to her first love, perhaps," he added, with a side glance at Torrens.

With which reflection the little man bustled away in search of fresh listeners, while Torrens beguiled the monotony of a solitary dinner by pondering over the strange news he had just heard, and counting the hours which still separated him from Annie.

Some four months later, a party of six were assembled at dinner in one of the prettiest detached villas of South Kensington, the residence of the widowed Mrs. Thornton. It was their first family gathering since the coming home of Egerton and his bride from their honeymoon trip, and included, in addition to the hostess, the young couple and Fred, Captain Augustus Torrens, of the Blues, who had officiated as best man at the wedding, and Annie's bosom friend, Carrie Wetherell, a lively little brunette who had also figured on that auspicious occasion in the character of bridesmaid.

With such congenial elements it is needless to say that the conversation never flagged for an instant. The captain was in high feather, and kept up a running fire of "chaff" with Miss Carrie, which that damsel, nothing loth, returned with interest ; while Mrs. Thornton, with maternal solicitude, was busily engaged in discussing with Annie the important question of "ways and means."

"I am so glad, darling," she said, "that you like the house I have taken for you."

"It is perfectly delightful, *mamma*. Think how nice for me to be so near you when Egerton is at his chambers."

"Chambers !" interrupted Captain Augustus, glancing at the speaker with real or affected amazement. "What does a married man want with chambers?"

"Annie doesn't approve of my leading an idle life," said his brother, demurely. "So I intend to put my shoulder to the wheel, and Fred will pass me a brief now and then, when he has any to spare."

This allusion to Mr. Frederick Thornton, who, though some years Egerton's senior at the bar, had hitherto signally failed in convincing

the attorneys of his forensic ability, was received with a roar of laughter, in which none more heartily joined than the good-humoured object of the joke.

"Well," he retorted, "if by any very improbable contingency you should be deprived of that advantage,"—here the merriment redoubled—"and are unable to earn an honest penny in a legitimate way, you have always Annie's jewel-case to fall back upon. Your governor's pearl necklace will keep you both out of the workhouse at any rate for a year or two."

"Oh, Fred, how can you!" exclaimed the youthful matron, properly shocked at the idea. "As if you didn't know that, with his talent, a man is sure to make his fortune sooner or later."

"There *may* be such phenomena, sanguine sister mine," gravely responded her incorrigible brother; "but, like Brummell and the half-penny, I give you my word that I never saw one."

"By the way, Egerton," remarked the Captain, "talking of making fortunes, I met an old acquaintance of yours in the park to-day; Lady Berringfield, looking as pale as a ghost."


"Was she not the beautiful Miss Trevelyan?" inquired Carrie.

"The same, but so awfully gone off that I scarcely knew her. She has hardly been married two months, and looks as if she had all the cares of the world on her shoulders. No wonder, with a husband like Croesus Berringfield, as they call him. Greatest brute alive."

"L'argent ne fait pas toujours le bonheur!" sentimentally chimed in Miss Wetherell.

"At all events," said Egerton rather sadly, "she has acted according to her lights, and chosen the substance. Whereas," he continued, glancing fondly at Annie, "a young lady who shall be nameless has charitably contented herself with the shadow."

"And a very substantial shadow too," added the irrepressible Fred. "Six feet two in his stockings, and grown so fearfully stout that, when we meet next week at Somerton, he will be lucky if he finds a horse able to carry him!"



## AN OLD BIRD.

IN the streets near Leicester Square there are many such shops as Mr. Birch's. To the unaccustomed eye, and contrasted with the neat and tasteful arrangements of West-end shops, all is chaos here—bed-chairs, and sofas, tables, dim looking pictures, and cracked china vases are heaped together in gloomy confusion. The things—many of them look worthless—one wonders where the people exist who would buy them, and how Mr. Birch contrives to live. Look at that dirty stuffed parrot now! Once, perchance, it was clean and protected by a glass case—now it rests on a broken stand, leaning helplessly against the foot of a mahogany towel-horse, which piece of furniture has the dismal appearance of having discovered that "all is vanity."

Mr. Birch himself—a small, withered-looking man, who might well be supposed to have been accustomed never to see the fresh "first" of anything—advanced to the narrow opening his goods allowed him, and stood at the door one drizzly November morning. He watched the busy and anxious passengers with a dry, impassible gaze, until one paused and looked into his shop. This looker-in was an unmistakable Jew; and Mr. Birch had one strong feeling—namely, aversion to Jews.

"How mosh ish that old bird?" inquired the possible customer.

The dealer turned slowly round to look at the aged parrot; then replied "Five shillings."

"Five shillin'!" cried the Jew incredulously. "You most mean five pence!"

"I mean what I say—but you've no call to buy it," and Mr. Birch put his hands in his pockets, and stared across the road.

The Jew shook his head and passed on.

Presently there came by a young carpenter with a bright and genial face. The foggy air seemed clearer for his lively whistling, and Mr. Birch almost returned the smile with which this young man nodded, "Good morning," as was his daily custom.

For three days the Jew came and looked in at the old parrot. In spite of the chilling character of his reception, each day he offered a trifle for the bird, and the third day raised his bid to four-and-six-pence.

No persuasions would move Mr. Birch, and when the Jew went away, as usual there came by the young carpenter, just as the dealer had lifted the parrot down from its leaning place.

"That's a queer bird!" said Joe, stopping at the door. "It's not showy, governor!"

"No, but you shall have it cheap, if you want it."

Now, Joe was going to be married, and was fitting up two little rooms for his marital residence. He thought, perhaps, he could make a neat case for the bird, and ornament the top of a cupboard with it.

"You shall have it for two shillings; I want to sell it to spite a Jew that's haggling for it. I can't abide a Jew!"

So Joe paid his two shillings, rolled his purchase in a red pocket-handkerchief, and went his way.

Next day the Jew came again, and peered about for the bird.

"I've come to offer you four-and-ninepence, Mr. Birch; you can't say no to that."

"The bird's sold," calmly replied the dealer.

"Sold! and who has bought him!" exclaimed the other, with disappointed agitation.

"A young carpenter," said the dealer.

"Could you tell me where he lives?"

"I don't know. He passes this way from his work, that's all I can say," and Mr. Birch turned on his heel and left the Jew to ruminate at his door. Just then, Joe came whistling by, and his bag of tools betrayed his calling. The Jew followed him down to the corner of the street, and then spoke.

"I beg pardon—but did you buy an old stuffed bird yesterday?"

"Yes," said Joe, surprised.

"It is a very shabby bird—but I had a fancy for it. Would you sell it again, and make a little by it?"

"I don't know as I would, and I'm not sure as I wouldn't. I won't decide to-day."

"Well, I will ask you to-morrow—think it over," said the Jew. Joe nodded and went on to his dinner. That evening he determined to examine the old parrot, for he felt sure some reason must exist for the Jew's anxiety about the purchase. Accordingly he took the red bundle out of the cupboard, and untied it, placing the bird on a table before him. Dim with dirt, it had a poor appearance. Joe found a brush and set to work scattering dust from the shabby feathers. Then a duster rubbed up the eyes and legs. Presently a wonderful sparkle from the tips of the claws flashed on Joe's wondering sight. With a low whistle and a puzzled look, the young carpenter slowly began to roll up the bird in the red handkerchief.

"I'll take it to Patty."

"Of course "Patty" was the intended wife of Joe Smith. She met him with appropriate smiles and blushes at the door of her father's little workshop, the father being a working jeweller.

"Patty," said Joe, after the usual tokens of civilised love-making had passed between them: "I've got something in this bundle that puzzles me."

"Why, what can it be?" cried Patty, and her bright eyes looked so eagerly at him that he forthwith followed her into the little parlour, and untied the handkerchief.

"Is it alive?" cried Patty, shrinking with pretty fear behind her lover, as she caught sight of the tail feathers.

"No, no," said Joe, laughing; "bin dead a hundred years or more."

This announcement aroused a feeling of temporary security in Patty, and she approached to examine the parrot.

"What a queer old thing! Why it's only a parrot, Joe, just like Aunt Mary's, only dirtier!"

Patty felt and showed a little contempt that such a trifle should puzzle her Joe. He, however, had not played his cards yet, and, manlike, enjoyed the idea of crushing her with them.

He slowly lifted the bird close to the lamp and said: "Has Aunt Mary's parrot got claws like those?"

Patty darted back, her cheek paling.

"Joe," she said, in a trembling whisper, "let's take it to father."

The bird was solemnly enveloped once more, and Joe followed Patty into the presence of an old, white-bearded man who wore glasses that shone in the light of the lamp by which he was working.

"Father!" cried Patty, in an excited low voice, "put by your work a minute. Joe, show him the bird."

Off came the red handkerchief, as Mr. Bond indulgently withdrew his glasses, and down went the parrot in front of him.

"A stuffed parrot!" said the old man, quietly. "Going to make an ornament for Patty with him?"

"Look at his claws—put on your glasses!" cried Patty. Wonderingly her father obeyed—and a faint tinge rose in his withered cheek.

"Diamonds!" he whispered, in an awe-struck voice.

"The eyes are queer," pursued Joe, in a tone of concentrated excitement.

"A breathless pause while the old jeweller rubbed at the eyes with a leather.

"Rubies—splendid rubies!" cried Mr. Bond, exultantly.

Patty and Joe looked at each other, and both faces were very pale. The jeweller continued to examine the precious stones, and at length said:

"How came you by this, Joe?"

"Bought it for two shillings at a second-hand shop, full of rubbish. Mr. Birch's, you know. He offered it to me for two shillings to spite a Jew that was after it."

"Ha! a Jew wanted it! He knew its worth! Why didn't he secure it?"

"Because he wouldn't pay five shillings for it."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the old man, softly; "he lost a bargain here."

"And he found that out somehow," said Joe; "for he stopped me in the street to see if I'd sell it again for a trifle over what I gave."



Again Mr. Bond laughed gleefully ; and then he sobered down.

"Children," he said, "Providence has put a rare chance in your way."

"Providence isn't *chance*, father," softly corrected Patty.

"No, no more it is. Well, these jewels are worth, I should say, a thousand pounds at the very least ! That'll start you fair !"

There was a minute's silence. Then Joe put his arm round Patty, and whispered :

"We can go and take a little farm in America, now, Patty. You know that has been the ambition of my life."

Patty smiled—and then her face grew troubled.

"Poor father !" she whispered ; "he's only got me ! I couldn't leave him here, Joe."

"He shall come, too !" cried Joe ; and leave off his blinding work, and enjoy his old age amongst the fields and trees—he hasn't seen many days of them in his youth."

So it was agreed. The stones realised rather more than the thousand pounds ; the Jew was peremptorily told that Joe would not sell again, though he made him the handsome offer of ten shillings ; and after the wedding and lively Christmas, these three departed for a new land, where they prospered.

The old bird was popularly supposed to have been the pet, while living, of some Indian Prince ; and after being stuffed and enriched with jewellery, to have found its way to the old shop, through many adventures, which so disfigured it as to hide its value.

Joe and Patty had the bird "done up" again, and their children feel an admiring awe of the parrot that was the unconscious author of their prosperity.

MINNIE DOUGLAS.



## OVER THE SEA.

I AM looking back through the days and weeks  
 That lie in the shadowy land of yore,  
 And a waking spirit stirs and speaks—  
 The spirit of dead years gone before.

Speaks with a murmur of mournful sighs,  
 In a voice that carries the sound of tears,  
 And lighting the lamp of its passionate eyes,  
 It opens the shroud of the buried years.

The wind is blowing up from the wold,  
 The stars are shining down on the sea,  
 But the wind is bleak, and the light is cold,  
 And 'tis only of pain they speak to me.

For the wind once toyed with a silken tress,  
 And the stars once shone on a saintly face;  
 And how can a faithful love grow less?  
 Or a new love take the old love's place?

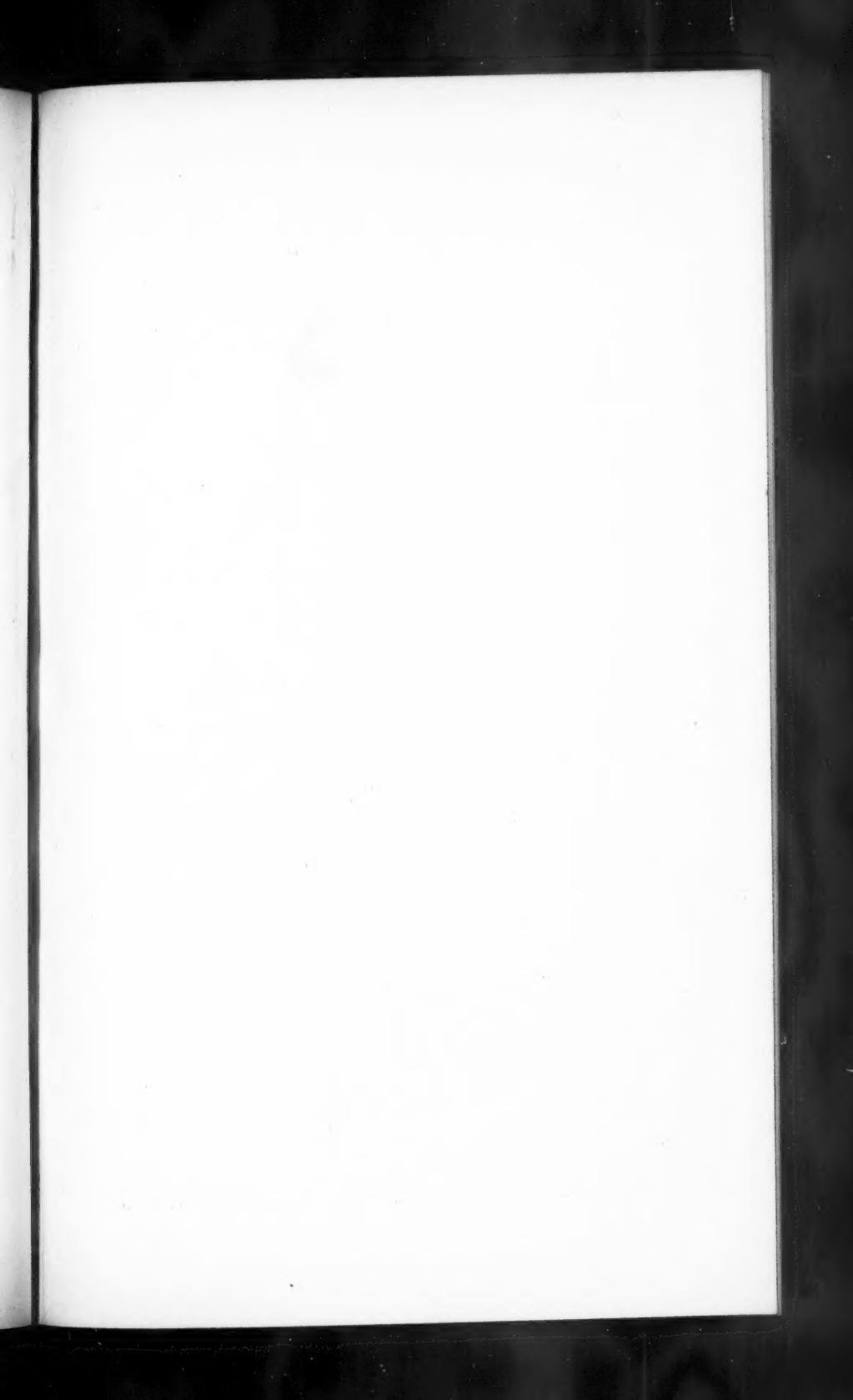
The sea is swirling up to my feet,  
 Singing its monody, soft and low;  
 But the song of the sea is deadly sweet,  
 For I mind how it slew me years ago.

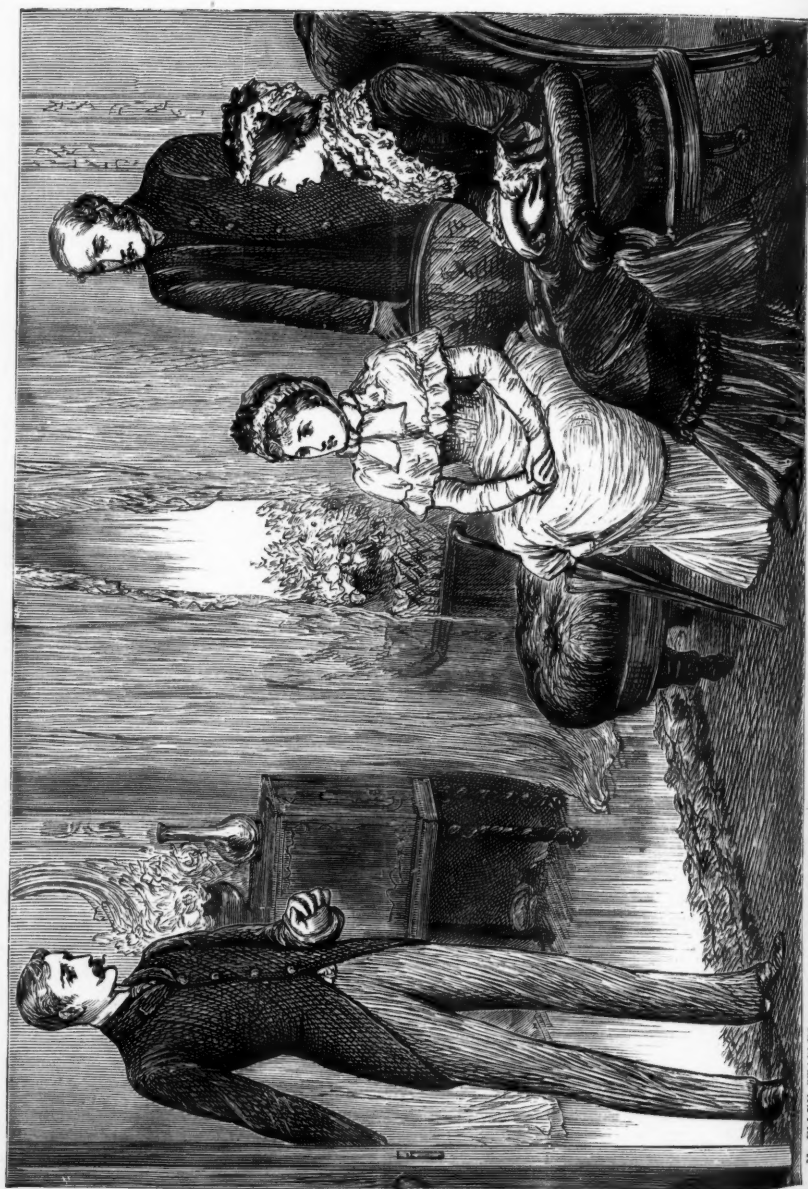
We had been parted, I and she,  
 With many a hundred miles between,  
 And now she was coming across the sea,  
 (Oh, the sky was blue and the waves were green!)

Coming—and yet she never came!  
 Meeting—and yet we met no more!  
 She heard me not when I called her name,  
 Though the dead might have heard me on that shore.

Oh, Love, though my eyes but dimly see,  
 There is Hope in my pathway where I tread—  
 That over the sea thou wilt sail to me,  
 In the day when the sea gives up her dead.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.





MR. ELLER STAPLES.  
"GODFREY FELT AS IF HE HAD NOTHING BEEN AWAKENED FROM A DREAM OF THE TRUMPET."  
H. AND S. TAYLOR.